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Note: Recent issues of The Bulletin, including this one, can be viewed in full color on our website at www.cslfdn.org.

Front and back covers: Reproduced here is a typical double-page spread from the Parisian fashion magazine, Art – Goût – Beauté. See lead article by M. Patricia Morris.

Picture Credits. All illustrations are from the collections of the California State Library. Photographs on pages 20 and 22-23 are by Vincent Beiderbecke and on page 21 by Francelle Phillips. Scans are created by Mr. Beiderbecke.

Design: Angela Tannehill, Tannehill Design

California State Library Foundation  
1225 8th Street, Suite 345, Sacramento, CA 95814  
tel: 916.447.6331  
web: www.cslfdn.org  
email: info@cslfdn.org
Art, Taste, and Beauty
Come to the State Library
By M. Patricia Morris

"THE FINEST OF ALL FASHION PUBLICATIONS"

I think it is the most beautiful magazine I have ever seen," said Gary Kurutz, the State Library’s head of Special Collections, as he pointed to the illustrations in the newly arrived issues of “Art – Goût – Beauté: Feuille–lets de L’Élégance Féminine” Translated from the French, the title means Art – Taste – Beauty: Pages of Feminine Elegance. This stunning French monthly, which describes itself as “The Finest of All Fashion Publications,” was produced in Paris during the 1920s and 30s. Printed in three languages, French, Spanish and English, it features the creations of leading Paris dressmakers and milliners.

Thomas E. Vinson, California State Library Foundation board member and current treasurer, and his wife Margaret have generously presented the State Library with seventeen English-language issues, spanning the period November 1922 to February 1925. Apparently, full runs of the magazine are exceedingly rare, and the issues in the 1920s are the most coveted by collectors. Mr. Vinson, however, obtained his magazines from his grandmother.

Every issue is twenty-eight pages, folded in the center, and secured with a silk cord. According to the appraiser’s Description of Goods, “As the epitome of art deco fashion, these are artifacts, which perfectly embody the styles of the time.” The influence of the art deco movement is in evidence both in the style of the clothing and of the magazine, beginning with the...

M. Patricia Morris is a frequent contributor to the Bulletin. She is active in several community groups and loves to hike the French countryside.

Every issue of Art – Goût – Beauté featured eye-catching pages. These tipped-in pochoir pictures illustrated a section called “Modes of the Moment.” October 1923.
The new year of 1925 of Art – Goût – Beauté was published with this spectacular pochoir embellished front cover.
front cover pages with their black geometrical borders on brown paper setting off lavishly-colored illustrations of sleek clothing.

This publication’s elegance is owing in a large measure to the magnificent pochoir illustrations printed in the text and tipped in, as well as the tipped on illustrations on the front covers. Pochoir is the French word for stencil. The pochoir process is a specialty that flourished in France in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and was a technique frequently used in fashion magazines. Artists created multiple copies of images by hand-painting over stencils made of metal or other materials. Adela Spindler Roatcap observed in an article for The Book Club of California’s Quarterly News-Letter, “Pochoir illustrations left photomechanical color reproduction far, far behind in their freshness and vibrancy. .”

Albert Godde, Bedin and Company was subtle about revealing its role as the magazine’s publisher, as there is no masthead listing its name. The company was a large wholesale silk manufacturer. The firm operated mills in Lyon, Tarare, and Mulhouse France; Lodz, Poland; St. Johns, Canada; as well as Andover and Depew in the state of New York, among other locales. Its estimated sixty-two branch offices circled the globe, including outlets in New York City and San Francisco. One of the clues to the publisher’s identity lies in the colophon, stating in French that the magazine was illuminated and published under the artistic direction of H. [Henri] Rouit on the presses of the special printing works of Albert Godde, Bedin and Company.

It doesn’t take a reader long to notice that the initial letters of the publisher are the same as those of magazine’s title — AGB. The company used the magazine to maximum advantage to showcase its products. Every issue contains a page with a “coloured drawing of some silk material in favor.” Adding to the delights of leafing through Art – Goût – Beauté are the striking endpapers, which highlight a different AGB fabric in every issue. Each one is unobtrusively labeled with the number and name of the material. In the Noel issue of 1922, the endpapers are identified as No. 12078/1 Crepe de Chine.

JUST FOR THE PLEASURE OF IT

It is a delight to peruse these publications just to admire the richly colored drawings, the beautifully designed advertisements, the superb renditions of historic clothing in sections called “Feminine Fashions Past and Present.” As a magazine that tried to achieve the highest standards in every aspect of production, its writing is as engaging as its artistry. One certainly would not want to miss the monthly essay by Rosine. She is described in one of the magazine’s promotional advertisements as “a recognized authority on all questions of dress and fashions” and the writer of the monthly “technical article.”

Her articles are always in the first person, written in a conversational, sometimes playful, sometimes gossipy style, while she confidently interprets what is currently in fashion and what is
Imported metal and silk laces for evening wear so popular for this Winter can be had in our Trimming Department.

The famed San Francisco department store, City of Paris, placed an advertisement in every issue of the magazine.
appropriate to wear on different occasions. How could a woman resist the flounces she describes in this passage from the September 1923 issue:

Can it be that for once in a way fashion is becoming so logical as to take the seasons of the year into account? Flounces will be arranged in all sorts of new ways: At Drecoll’s one of the new satin crepe models is trimmed with a high pleated flounce which edges the dress in front and at the sides, and, on the back, comes up to the shoulders. When this flounce quivers in the breeze it reminds one of the famous statue in the Louvre, the winged figure of Victory from Samothrace, and gives a wonderful effect of airiness and grace to the wearer’s figure.

There is a lot to be learned from Rosine about how to be current and chic. Her counsel is often inserted in the form of an italicized “NOTE,” like this one:

Although [sic] I daresay nobody will listen to me, I must confess that, apart from any question of decency, very close-fitting dresses are a mistake, a very great mistake. All women are not shaped like Phryne. Those portions of their lower limbs which they display so freely are not always pretty to look at; and besides, in this matter as in others, is not illusion better than reality.

A MAGAZINE FOR SMART WOMEN

It is readily apparent that Rosine is addressing her remarks to the upper crust of society. Rarely, if ever, in the pages of the Library’s seventeen issues is there any mention about the appeal of the cut or drape of a dress to the opposite sex. There is instead an emphasis on the right thing to wear for the season and the occasion, whether it is a day at the horse races, a visit to a country estate, or a soiree in the city. The theme for the September 1923 issue does, in fact, center on a fox hunt. As the reader progresses through the magazine’s pages, she is educated in the proper attire to be worn throughout the day beginning with “Le Rendez-vous,” when participants and observers first arrive for the hunt, to “La Reception au Chateau” — the evening soiree, which features eight delicious creations for the occasion all by different dressmakers and with great variety in design.

THE LATEST CREATIONS OF THE GREAT DRESSMAKERS

Every issue of Art – Goût – Beauté devotes sixteen pages to “fashion designs showing the latest creations of the great dressmakers.” Beneath each lovely frock is the name of the model, a brief description of the garment, including the fabric used to make it and in plainer, bolder print, the name of the designer. Like a cast of characters in a film, the same designers appear with varying frequency from issue to issue. Listed in the last two issues are the contributing houses, boasting names...
The editors of the July 1923 number embellished this page with accessories needed for a carriage ride in the park or country.

Each issue included enticing advertisements for luxury products like Parisian perfume.

such as Doucet, Drecoll, Molyneux, Jean Patou, Worth, and Paul Poiret. Of note, is the name Worth. Though Maison Worth exhibits only a few dresses in the State Library’s run of issues, the house has a special significance in the history of Paris fashion. Its founder Charles Frederick Worth (1826–1895) is known as the father of the “haute couture” industry in France. Haute couture literally translated from the French means “high sewing.” After Worth died, his sons carried on the business and in 1901 hired a young French designer named Paul Poiret, whose influence contributed to a revolution in fashion. In his designs, he liberated women, first from the petticoat, then the corset, and shifted the placement of the waistline. He drew inspiration from antique, oriental, and eastern clothing such as the Japanese kimono and North/African and Middle Eastern caftan.

His softer, simpler dresses were cut in straight lines and with an emphasis on draping rather than tailoring. He shortened skirts, and in some designs made them narrower around the ankle. Other contemporary dressmakers like Madeleine Vionnet also experimented with simpler, cylindrical styles, but Poiret had the advantage over other designers of being a gifted publicist.

In the 1920s, when Art – Goût – Beauté was in circulation, French designers exerted a commanding influence on fashion internationally. To make it possible for American and other foreign customers, who desired a new frock with a Paris label, model dresses were made available to department stores and dressmakers. Pamela Parmal, describes in The Fashion Show Paris Style, a book published by a division of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, how this practice worked:

Foreign [outside of France] department stores, dressmakers, wholesale importers, and manufacturers used the model designs and the couturiers’ names attached to them to successfully market their wares in their own country. Department stores and importers who sold dry goods to dressmakers and smaller custom shops began to publish catalogues that included a photo of the Paris design along with a list of the materials needed to have it made — which they could of course supply.

THE CITY OF PARIS DRY GOODS COMPANY

The City of Paris Dry Goods Company in San Francisco was an enterprise well prepared to meet the demand for Parisian fashions. It is the only American company to be found among the advertisers in the State Library’s Art – Goût – Beauté. The company had its origins in the California Gold Rush. Felix Verdier, a silk stocking manufacturer in Nimes, France, was convinced that more profit could be made by selling finery and goods to miners than by searching for gold in the “diggings.” He chartered a ship that sailed into San Francisco Bay in May 1850 laden with lingerie, fabrics, laces and wine. The crew never even unloaded
The May 1924 issue carried this alluring advertisement for “The Smart Bootmaker.”
the boat. Miners rowed up to it, and bought everything. Verdier rushed back to France; filled up another boat and returned the next year in 1851, this time opening up a small store. Under the proprietorship of the Verdier brothers Felix and Emile, the store was named the “City of Paris” after their first ship and given the ship’s motto “Fluctuat nec mergitur; it floats and never sinks.”

Succeeding generations of the Verdier family kept the store in operation for more than 120 years. Though there would be many branch stores in the San Francisco Bay area, the main store was located in the city’s central shopping district on Geary and Stockton Streets adjacent to Union Square. The building withstood the Earthquake of 1906, but was gutted by the ensuing fire. Reopened in 1909, the newly constructed, six-story structure featured an elegant rotunda at its center. The stained-glass ceiling sported an image of the Verdiers’ first ship, together with the company motto Fluctuat nec mergitur.

It was under Paul Verdier, who became vice-president in 1909 and later president, that the store achieved its greatest success. According to an article in the May 19, 1972 issue of Le Californien, Paul Verdier, “saw his store as an amalgamation of specialty shops under one roof.” The article goes on to say that “he worked tirelessly to bring the best of the world’s markets to the city he loved until his death in 1966.”

The advertisements found in all seventeen issues of the Library’s Art – Goût – Beauté magazines attest to the wide variety of French imports in the store. Advertisements for silk stockings, fabrics, trimmings, laces, and decorative objects such as hand held mirrors and clocks fill the pages. Carefully phrased wording enticed the potential patron. One ad for example treats the patron to a picture of eight beautiful purses with these words in capital letters: “THE NEWEST IDEAS IN PARIS FOR BAGS ARE LUMINOUS BEADS EMBROIDERED ON SILK; LOOKING UNUSUALLY EFFECTIVE AT NIGHT.” Another ad promises “The preferred hats of the chic parisiennes can be found at the “CITY OF PARIS.” This ad features drawings of women modeling six stylish “chapeaux.”

The City of Paris never “sank;” never entered into bankruptcy, but it began to lose money and was closed in 1972. It was sold to Amfac and reopened as Liberty House at the City of Paris. Neiman Marcus now has a store on the site of the old City of Paris. Though Neiman Marcus constructed a new building, it retained the rotunda, moving it to the entranceway. If you visit the building today and look up toward the top of the rotunda, you will see the Verdiers’ ship still sailing away along with their optimistic motto.

“IN THE REALM OF FASHION”

By the early 1920s, World War I was over and America was going back to work. This was a new, freer time for women. They had recently gained the vote. More of them were going to college and more of them were working in public places. Though prohibition was in force, it was no deterrent to having a good time. It was an era that would be labeled with colorful names – “The Roaring Twenties,” and the “Jazz Age.” If you could transport yourself back to the 1920s as a well-heeled, slender young thing who longed to wear the latest, most elegant styles, an afternoon spent reading through the pages of Art –Goût – Beauté would give you some splendid ideas.

ENDNOTES

1. The declaration that Art-Goût-Beauté is “the finest of all fashion publications” appears in a subscription advertisement, No. 49, September 1924, NP.
2. The appraisal and Description of Goods was provided by John Windle of San Francisco, California, who specializes in the sale of antiquarian and rare books.
6. Art-Goût-Beauté advertisement, No. 49, September 1924, NP.
7. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. The last two sentences in this paragraph summarize information drawn from Cosgrave, Costume and Fashion, p.220 and Parmal, Fashion Show Paris Style, p. 74.
13. The information relating to history of the City of Paris was drawn mainly from an article in Le Californien, May 19, 1972, Pages of the Past Section, pages 2 and 4. Le Californien was a bilingual newspaper published in San Francisco. This edition was printed as a souvenir to celebrate the reopening of the City of Paris as City of Paris-Liberty House under Amfac Company on May 22, 1972.
14. “In the Realm of Fashion” is the title of the principal essay by Rosine in Art-Goût-Beauté, No. 36, August 1923.
Spectacular Collection of Real Photo Postcards Donated by E. F. Mueller

By Robert Greenwood
Thanks to the generosity of E. F. (Al) Mueller of Las Vegas, Nevada, the California State Library has received an important and large collection of real photo postcards. All of these cards are of California interest, depicting towns, factories, celebrities, social events, parades, mines, baseball teams, railroad stations, hotels, floods, etc. In short, a universe of subject matter. There are 2,590 cards in the Mueller gift. It would be next to impossible to duplicate this collection today.

The State Library has a large collection of postcards, of both the linen and chrome variety, as well as real photo cards, but the Mueller donation will add considerably to the collection, because Mr. Mueller collected, for the most part, only real photo cards, which are in a class by themselves. This gift makes the California State Library’s collection of postcards one of the largest extant, a valuable research source for the pictorial history of the Golden State.*

Some readers may wonder what real photo postcards are and why they are important. So an explanation of their history is appropriate here. Of course, other types of postcards existed before the advent of real photo cards, such as gravure cards, half-tone cards, and lithographed cards. It was in 1902 that the Eastman Kodak Company marketed its postcard-size photographic film and papers. They quickly followed with a folding camera (model No. 3A) that was especially designed for making real photo postcards. To make matters even simpler, an amateur photographer could mail the camera with exposed film to Eastman Kodak. They would develop and print the postcards and return them with a reloaded camera to the customer. The company offered two different photographic papers; both could be developed and printed in a darkroom using controlled lighting. These innovations in photography as applied to the postcard captured the public interest. Why? Because it had become possible for anyone who owned a camera to make his own personalized photo postcard.

Real photo postcards, like any photograph, can be enlarged to bring out the smallest details. Enlargements of a printed card, on the other hand, will only magnify the pattern of dots in a half-tone, or the particular process used in its manufacture. Real photo postcards have a glossy finish, like any photograph. For

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Mr. Greenwood was a partner in the Talisman Press, the author of seven books, including Nevada Post Card Album, Photographic Views of Nevada, 1901–1928, Holabird Americana Press; California Imprints: 1833–1862, Talisman Press; A Valiant Enterprise: A History of the Talisman Press, 1951–1993, Book Club of California. In addition, he has generously donated many postcards in a variety of formats to the State Library’s California History Section.

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*In addition, he has generously donated many postcards in a variety of formats to the State Library’s California History Section.
quality and authenticity of image, the real photo card is in a class by itself.

Amateur home-town photographers, being present on the spot, as it were, could photograph any number of events: a Fourth of July parade, the opening of a new bank, a baseball game, a picnic—whatever might make for an interesting subject. Unlike the mass-produced linen cards that catered to broad tastes and a broader market, most real photo cards were produced in limited quantity. A local photographer who made a card of a local event in a small town might expect to sell only a few dozen, if that many. A card made by an amateur photographer showing his wife in the driver’s seat of their new Reo automobile might be limited to only a half dozen. They were made in limited quantities to begin with, and many have been lost because of the ephemeral nature of the postcard. Consequently, they are prized by institutions and collectors.

The earliest cards in the Mueller collection are dated 1903 and extend into the early 1930s, a few beyond. But the bulk of the collection emphasizes the earlier dates. Some of the cards are so rare they might be considered unique, views of small towns that either no longer exist or are merely a wide spot in the road. Overall, the Mueller collection provides a window on California during a time often neglected by historians; when there were few paved roads, no computers and television, electricity available only in the larger cities and towns, and no cell phones. In a sense, life was more relaxed, though not without its hardships.

We are grateful to Mr. Mueller for putting this collection together and making a gift of it to the California State Library. He spent over twenty years gathering these cards, attending postcard and antique shows. Mr. Mueller is a native of Vermont and came to Las Vegas sixty years ago, when Las Vegas was only a shadow of what it is today. He worked at the Desert Inn as a floor manager for fifteen years when it was owned by Wilbur Clark, and one of the few casino/hotels on the Strip. He later owned and managed a real estate mortgage company for several years in Las Vegas. In addition to collecting California cards, Mr. Mueller also built a large and impressive collection of Nevada real photo cards, which he gifted to the Nevada Historical Society in Reno, Nevada.

* The Mueller Collection is now being cataloged and digitized under the direction of senior librarian Marianne Leach of the State Library’s California History Section. Elizabeth Yeatts is creating the online catalog record and Vincent Beiderbecke is producing high resolution scans of each card. The entire collection will be made available via the State Library’s online computer system.
(Top to bottom) Real photo postcards were used to document disasters such as this 1907 flood in Oroville.

Miners at the Church Mine near the town of El Dorado, El Dorado County pose for this group portrait.

Postcards such as this recorded everyday mercantile operations. Here two clerks pose in front of their canned goods at a store in Newman, Stanislaus County in 1909.

(Top to bottom) Railroad employees and dog pose in front of a stylish streetcar on the La Jolla Line of Los Angeles and San Diego Railway. It stopped in front of the Hotel Cabrillo in 1909.

An unknown photographer captured this dramatic view of the Graf Zeppelin attached to its mooring mast in Los Angeles at Mines Field. In 1929, the “Giant of the Air” made a round-the-world flight.

Workers pose in front of this Southern Pacific Railroad snowplow at Blue Canyon in February 1918.
I first met Joe D’Ambrosio at a garden party at Chuck Monell’s home in Hancock Park in 1985.1 Friends had gathered to celebrate the noted printer Ward Ritchie’s eightieth birthday. What a treat for this green “Californian” to join with Ward and all of his friends. Of course, Gloria Stuart was there, but also Larry and Faye Powell, Bob and Lorraine Vosper, Jake Zeitlin, John Dreyfus, Muir and Agnes Dawson, Glen Dawson, and a host of others; too many to really remember all of the names.2

But it was my meeting with Joe that sticks in my mind. Chuck took him and me into the alcove in the living room and introduced us. He encouraged Joe to show me his latest book, *Birds of Paradise*, that Joe had finished the previous year. Almost embarrassed, Joe pushed it over to me. I was not prepared for what I would see. A new world of books opened for me on that day. Sure I had seen beautiful rare books; what good self-respecting librarian hadn’t been in a rare book room or two. We certainly had them at the State Library, and my history of the book course at the University of Michigan had introduced me to the possibilities.

This was a new experience. The book covers were glass covering a set of incredible serigraphs, signatures bound with bamboo rods. But it was inside the covers that dazzled the eye. The double-page folding screen, the inset patterned paper encircling bold type, the decorations throughout were all something quite different. There was something about this experience that would stay with me through my association with D’Ambrosio that spanned that time until his untimely passing. Incidentally, my copy of the broadside Joe made to commemorate the event of the day is numbered “1/100” which he slipped to me during that meeting. He told me the “dignitaries” were all to receive those marked “AP.”3 I treasure that to this day along with most of the broadsides Joe created over the years.

I was later to learn that he had been in Los Angeles only a

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Gary E. Strong is UCLA University Librarian, former director of the Queensborough Public Library, California State Librarian, and founder of the State Library Foundation. He is a generous donor to the Foundation and has formed a truly elegant collection of California fine press books.

Memories of Joe D’Ambrosio, Artist of the Book

By Gary E. Strong
short time, coming from Illinois where he had ventured into the creation of artist’s books after a career in engineering. His almost apologetic nature that someone would appreciate his work would follow our relationship over many years. As our friendship grew, I would often stop by his print shop—half of the garage in the San Fernando Valley where he would have otherwise parked his car—to catch up and visit. I was always welcomed as a long-time friend. I began collecting his books; actually a stretch for my budget with a family and an all too small salary paid to the State Librarian of California. Each became a treasured addition.

As we began to plan for the 150th anniversary of the California State Library, it was to Joe that I turned to create something very special to mark that event. The result was a triptych of the front of the State Library rendered with cast paper of its two statues and the three entry doors. Credit to myself and Gary Kurutz was arrayed in the rendering of the work. That limited edition would mark the anniversary. Joe produced a prospectus in which his interpretation of the California poppy would serve as an ornament. When I arrived at UCLA, Joe used that ornament as the background for a bookplate that he created for my own collection. When my wife Carolyn and I established an endowment at the UCLA Library on my sixty-fifth birthday, Joe used that design again to create the bookplate that will note our contributions into the UCLA collection in future years.

With the triptych project behind us and a project to construct the Library and Courts II on the horizon, I approached Joe and asked if he might be interested in designing the floor of the entryway to the building. We had talked about such a commission over time and it was now time to see if it could be executed. Joe’s design was a burst of random letters encircling a stylized “CSL” in the center. It would be rendered in terrazzo under Joe’s careful eye. Today this is one of the highlights one crosses as you enter this building, a living testament to his legacy among book artists in California.

During the time when the State Library hosted the California Center for the Book, Joe presented classes, always filled, on book arts topics. He had done this in various places in the past, and having him in Sacramento for these was a treat. I recall one such visit where he insisted on coming to our home and making Carolyn and me dinner. The risotto was memorable. Joe also began a long-term relationship with The Book Club of California and the Sacramento Book Collectors Club, creating exhibitions and keepsakes that are precious to those who were lucky...
D’Ambrosio created this extraordinary binding for *The Small Garden of Gloria Stuart*. It is copy number forty of fifty copies.

The title page and binding for *Oaxaca and the Saguaro Cactus* (1996). The Library has copy number three of twenty-five copies of the deluxe edition. It is bound in Clansmen Niger goatskin with an inlaid figure of cactus on the front cover.

(Left: Middle and bottom) Printer’s plate and silk screen print in honor of Gary Strong’s contributions to the State Library. A copy hangs in the rotunda of the Library & Courts II Building.

(Below) *A Memoir of Book Design, 1969–2000* superbly documents his notable career as a book artist. The binding shown here is copy nine of twelve copies of the deluxe edition. It is bound in morocco grained leather, copper, and crumpled paper. It features a self-portrait on the front cover and a sunrise / sunset on the back.
enough to pick one up at an event or gathering. His attendance and talks at both of these groups were legendary.

In March of 1994, Carolyn and I drove to the Bay Area to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the California Literacy Campaign. Hundreds of learners, tutors, and library staff were gathering for a gala celebration of reading and literacy. Coming off of the elevator we ran into Joe. I could not believe our luck. Here he was; but why? We chatted a moment and he made some lame excuse as to why he was there—obviously flustered with our meeting. As I was rushing off to open the festivities, it didn’t really cross my mind until later in the evening, when I looked down from the dais to see him sitting in the audience. During the course of the evening’s program, I was presented with a “one-of-a-kind” volume that the staff had orchestrated without my knowledge. They had gathered individual written greetings and best wishes from every program and many leaders in literacy that Joe had assembled and bound together with an introductory section. Carolyn and I sat up into the night reading them all, and it is a high spot of my D’Ambrosio collection.

I would leave Sacramento in 1994 and move to Queens, New York City, but my relationship with Joe would flourish. He had moved to Arizona after the Northridge earthquake, so when Carolyn and I would visit Scottsdale during the February retreat from New York winters, we would catch up. Joe would set aside a copy of every book or broadside that he did, sending it along to me for my growing collection. When I decided to curate an exhibition at the Queens Library on the “Book as Art,” I asked Joe to create a broadside for the exhibit opening and exhibited many of his books as an integral part of the exhibition. He would design a personal bookplate for me using the Queens “Q” as a design element.

For our daughter Jen’s wedding, I asked Joe if he could create a book similar to what he had done for me earlier as a gift to Jen and her fiancé Josh. We placed bond paper and pens around the tables on that day, people wrote messages to the newlyweds, and we gathered them together. Joe created a truly wonderful remembrance of the day with a unique design that included blank pages for Jen and Josh to add memories of their lives together over the years to come.

During the past six years, I have worked to fill in the gaps of my D’Ambrosio holdings, acquiring a number of his one-of-a-kind commissions, mostly from his friend and collaborator Jim Lorson, as well as from the rare book market. As Joe experimented with books on CD, he made sure I had some of the mock-ups he used to produce these electronic creations.

It is difficult to say enough about someone who influenced one’s life in so many ways. Joe’s friendship, our collaborations, and my appreciation for his talent, artistry, and belief in creating beautiful things will be remembered and treasured.

ENDNOTES

1. Joe D’Ambrosio died on September 18, 2009. The State Library has many examples of his work including mockups, trial proofs, letters, and photographs. Joe created for the Library & Courts II Building a spectacular terrazzo floor celebrating the Roman alphabet. Dr. Monell, then a resident of Hancock Park, Los Angeles, served on the Foundation’s Board of Directors for many years.

2. The names mentioned at this garden party included distinguished librarians, book collectors, antiquarian booksellers, and book artists.

3. “AP” means artist’s proof.
first met former California State Librarian Carma Leigh in the early 1980s when I was a young librarian working for San Diego County Library. She was good friends with county librarian Catherine Lucas, who brought Carma to library and staff events. Although I was aware that Carma had been State Librarian, I had no idea what exactly that meant until many years later.

Then in 1996, shortly after returning to school for my doctorate, one of my professors took me aside and suggested that I research Carma’s career. My professor, Dr. Mary Niles Maack, had recently written an article on Robert D. Leigh, director of the 1949 study called the “Public Library Inquiry,” and in the process had become intrigued by his wife Carma. Since I had known her socially, I decided to investigate further. I was soon amazed by Carma’s stellar résumé!

A graduate of UC Berkeley’s School of Librarianship in 1930, Carma worked briefly at the Berkeley Public Library before becoming director of the Watsonville Public Library in 1931. In 1938, she became Orange County library director and then director of the San Bernardino County Library in 1942. She left California in 1945 to become Washington state librarian, only to return six years later when she was offered the position of California state librarian. I, too, was quickly intrigued by Carma’s many achievements and so made her career the focus of my doctoral dissertation.

**PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

The public library scene was in turmoil when Carma returned to California in 1951. Statewide, the population had exploded by fifty percent since 1940, and outdated libraries were bursting at the seams. Having introduced the notion of regional library systems in Washington State, Carma brought with her a real-life appreciation of cooperative ventures and almost immediately assembled an enthusiastic cross-section of librarians to foster the same concept in California. After a statewide study of library services and more than ten years of political wrangling, the Public Library Development Act was passed in 1963, allowing the creation of cooperative library systems. Carma considered this her greatest achievement as California state librarian.

But her influence was felt far beyond California. At the end of World War II, she had been part of a stalwart group of librarians who spent many years lobbying Congress to pass federal library legislation. Once the Library Services Act (LSA) was passed in 1956, she used the funds to bring the first bookmobile to Butte County. She also established a “processing center” at the State Library, where materials for sixteen Northern California city and county libraries were acquired and processed. In the early 1960s, she lobbied for the expansion of LSA to become the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA), which was passed in 1964. At an event celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of LSCA, she admonished colleagues to give their “utmost, most thoughtful, and timely, support” to the Washington, D.C. office of the American Library Association (ALA). “Take pride... in what has been accomplished; be determined to accomplish...
more,” she urged. “You are working always on the side of public interest.” In 1996, at the age of ninety-one, Carma was honored as one of several “Legislative and Grass Roots Champions” feted by ALA in Washington, D.C.

A ROLE MODEL FOR ALL

According to a landmark study conducted by Alice Bryan in the late 1940s, the typical librarian of the period was “submissive in social situations” and lacking in self-confidence. Indeed, she found that most people considered librarians “genteel” and “bookish” with little interest in the “politic-economic specialties and concerns of our time.” Librarians, Bryan concluded, avoid taking on leadership roles and are “slow to change.”

Carma, of course, embodied none of these library stereotypes and was, in fact, quite the opposite. By all accounts, she was charming, beautiful, and exuded a graciously professional demeanor. Her contemporary Gretchen Schenk described Carma as having “a striking appearance” and “an arresting vibrancy.” Even more importantly, Carma was able to inspire others to do good deeds. As her friend and colleague Maryan Reynolds once said, Carma had the “humor and joy of living” and “dedication to purpose” that motivated people “to achieve more than might have been reasonably expected.” No surprise, then, that ALA asked her to be part of a cultural envoy to West Germany as part of the post-World War II reconstruction effort in the early 1950s. Among her traveling companions were Deputy Librarian of Congress Frederick Wagman and renowned artist Alexander Calder, whom Carma called “Sandy.” The following year she was asked to join DACOWITS (Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services), a group of esteemed female leaders who toured military bases and reported on the working and living conditions of U.S. servicewomen. “Carma Leigh has generated enough motion … to keep us breathless,” Stockton-San Joaquin County Librarian Margaret Troke declared when Carma retired from the California State Library in 1972.

AN EXTRAORDINARY WOMAN

Carma was 104 years old when she died last year on September 25. She leaves a remarkable legacy and remains a role model for many of us. One former staff member called Carma’s tenure as California State Librarian a “golden age” of modernism and innovation. My own conclusion is that she was that rare mid-century woman who managed to shatter all gender and library stereotypes. To say she had an extraordinary career would not be an overstatement.

ENDNOTES

Stacey Aldrich was sworn in as State Librarian of California on November 19, 2009. Surrounded by an overflow crowd of friends, family, and colleagues, she took the oath of office in the newly dedicated J.S. Holliday Rare Book Room of the California State Library.

Stacey was appointed to the post by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, who stated in a press release that “Stacey is truly an expert in the field and California is lucky to have her as the State Librarian.” She had been Acting State Librarian since February 2009, and served as Deputy State Librarian from August 2007 forward. As Acting State Librarian, Stacey ably directed a staff of 155, oversaw a budget of $80 million, and worked with state and local officials on multiple projects, bonds, and initiatives of the State Library. She was instrumental this year in securing California’s participation in Opportunity Online, a major broadband initiative funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that will significantly improve and sustain public access to the Internet through California’s public libraries.

“I am so honored to have been appointed to be the State Librarian of California,” said Stacey. “We are so lucky to have the dedication and commitment of the California State Library Foundation to support the Library. I look forward to working with the Foundation to continue to build a State Library that preserves, collects, and connects people to the memories and stories of California.”

Stacey is an impassioned futurist who serves on the Board of Directors of the Association of Professional Futurists. In presentations and workshops here and abroad, she challenges librarians to actively shape the future of libraries by examining trends and technologies, building scenarios for possible future outcomes, then developing strategies to deal with those futures. Named one of Library Journal’s Movers & Shakers in 2003, Stacey is recognized as a national leader who’s shaping the future of the library profession.

Before joining the State Library, Stacey served as Assistant Director of the Omaha Public Library from 2005 to 2007; held two positions with the Maryland Department of Education—Branch Chief of Public Libraries and State Networking from 2000 to 2005; Public Library consultant from 1996 to 1999; and served as Senior Associate at Coates & Jarratt, Inc., a futuring think-tank, in 2000. She was Information Technology Librarian for Hood College Library in Frederick, Maryland, from 1992 to 1996. Stacey earned a Master of Arts in library science and a Bachelor of Arts in Russian language and literature from the University of Pittsburg. She belongs to the American Librarian Association, Public Librarian Association, California Library Association, and Beta Phi.

Stacey succeeds State Librarian Susan Hildreth, who became City Librarian of Seattle Public Library in February of last year.

Laura Parker is the State Library’s Information Officer.
Huell Howser Joins CCHE Grantees at the California State Library

By Mimi Morris

The California Cultural and Historical Endowment (CCHE) has been housed at the California State Library since 2002 when AB 716, the California Cultural and Historical Endowment Act, was signed by Governor Gray Davis. The CCHE was created to raise the profile and scope of California’s historic and cultural preservation program in an era of dwindling historic structures and cultural homogeneity.

The CCHE was funded with $128.4 million from Proposition 40, a 2002 bond initiative that included the very first bond funding dedicated to historical and cultural resource preservation. That funding, 10% or $26.7 million of the overall bond amount of $2.6 billion, was shared between the CCHE and the California Department of Parks and Recreation. Since 2004, the CCHE has awarded approximately $118 million to over 150 grantees throughout the state.

On September 30th, a gathering of many of those grantees and other members of California’s broader cultural and historical preservation world was held at the California State Library. Over 125 people crowded into the first and second floors of the Library and Courts II building. They were treated to wine, delicious appetizers, and a visual feast of beautiful exhibits of CCHE projects. Attendees were also treated to several engaging speeches and remarks.

Public Broadcasting television star Huell Howser was the keynote speaker. Though he has hosted the popular “California’s Gold” television program for many years, he had never heard of the CCHE nor many of the historic and cultural projects funded by the CCHE and was “like a kid in a candy store” at the reception. His remarks were greatly appreciated by the crowd as he touched on themes such as the perennial nature of California’s economic shifts and the valuable work being done by the assembled stewards of California’s cultural heritage.

Stacey Aldrich, who was then Acting State Librarian, was on hand to welcome the attendees to their California State Library. The full lineup of speakers also included California State Library Special Collections Curator and California State Library Foundation Executive Director Gary Kurutz, who had the crowd enthralled with his stories of the “Legislature of One Thousand Drinks” and the wonderful diversity of the California State Library’s collection.

Muriel Johnson, Executive Director of the California Arts Council, also participated in the official program and spoke about the importance of collaboration among the various state governmental entities charged with improving life in general for Californians through the arts.

State Historic Preservation Officer Wayne Donaldson stepped in for Ruth Coleman, Director of the California Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks), and shared some stories about the extensive historical and cultural properties overseen by California State Parks.

CCHE Executive Officer Mimi Morris spoke about the important lessons for current and future Californians taught through the stories preserved in these historical and cultural projects. For example, the Palace of Fine Arts rotunda restoration project in San Francisco speaks to the strength and resiliency of Californians in the face of adversity. The Palace was built for the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition also known as the 1915 World’s Fair. San Franciscans worked hard to have their city chosen as the venue for that prestigious event, knowing that they needed to restore confidence in San Francisco’s geological and financial stability following the devastating 1906 Earthquake and Fire. The highly successful fair restored confidence and launched a world-wide love affair with California.

Major sponsors for the event included the California Council for the Humanities, the California Arts Council, Townsend Public Affairs, and Griselda’s Catering. The California State Library Foundation joined many other organizations as a partner in support of the gathering. The CCHE plans to make this an annual event.

Mimi Morris is the Executive Officer of the California Cultural and Historical Endowment.
Dedication of J. S. Holliday Rare Book Room

By Laura Parker

The J. S. Holliday Rare Book Room was officially dedicated at a reception held in the State Library’s California History Room on November 15, 2009. Over seventy-five friends and colleagues, including a sizeable contingent from Carmel, gathered to honor Jim Holliday, a towering figure in California history who passed away in Carmel in 2006.

Emceed by Gary F. Kurutz, Curator of Special Collections for the State Library and the Foundation’s Executive Director, the program began with a few words by Stacey Aldrich, newly appointed State Librarian of California. Dr. Kevin Starr, eminent historian and State Librarian emeritus, read a moving tribute describing Holliday as a mix of refinement, exuberance, and rambunctiousness. Taelen Thomas, a performance artist from Carmel, followed with a dynamic rendering of Ryland Kelley’s poem “J. S. Holliday,” and Tim Holliday, Jim’s son, shared stories of a dad who exhorted his children to excel. At the close of the ceremony a commanding bronze bust of Holliday, sculpted by Jim’s widow, Belinda Vidor Holliday, was unveiled, after which guests gathered in the library’s rotunda to mingle and enjoy refreshments. Burnett Miller of Sacramento raised funds to defray the cost of the sculpture. A small sample of Holliday’s writings, part of a voluminous collection of papers and manuscripts housed in the State Library’s California History Section, were on display.

J.S. Holliday, or Jim as he was known to friends, was the pre-eminent historian of the California Gold Rush. A meticulous scholar, he often used the special collections of the State Library when assembling research for his books. Holliday believed in the transformative power of libraries, museums, and historical societies, and strongly urged these institutions to be more inclusive, and to incorporate less salutary aspects of California history into exhibits and publications. He was a scholar, mentor, and significant catalyst for changing our approach to California history. For many years, he served on the Foundation’s Board of Directors. The J.S. Holliday Rare Book Room is a fitting tribute to this remarkable man.

Laura Parker is the State Library’s Public Information Officer.
The newly named J. S. Holliday Rare Book Room within the Library’s California History Section Reading Room.

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