



Beautiful, creative works of art on paper from Greyweathers Press of Merrickville.

Grimsby Wayzgoose: For the Love of Paper and Print

By Gloria Hildebrandt
Photos by Mike Davis

WAYZGOOSE: ANNUAL FESTIVITY OF PRINTING HOUSE

More than 30 years ago, I am amazed to realize, I was a hand papermaker. My university roommate and I were trying to become self employed in our own papermaking business. We had a cute literary name for it, Hobbyhorse Mill. How we came to this scheme is a long story involving an economic recession and an influential University of Toronto English professor, not needed to be explained here. Our self education in the old craft of papermaking led us to an oddly named festival in a small town we had to look up on a map, Grimsby. We were off by TTC and a couple of intercity buses, to the first annual Wayzgoose.

Here we saw printers, small press owners and paper products of every description, and felt that just possibly, our small sheets of unusual paper were decent enough to be exhibited at the next year's Wayzgoose.

It was not to be. Energy and finances dwindled to the point where we realized there were easier ways to make a living than having our hands in cold water pulling pulp all day. Still, the awareness of the world of fine paper and printing endures, so that I was able to have a long, intelligent conversation with an employee of Il Papiro, an exclusive paper shop, in Florence last fall, as he demonstrated the antique art of marbling paper.

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Tim and Elke Inkster of The Porcupine's Quill in Erin have been displaying their award-winning publications at the Wayzgoose for 25 years.

Passion for Paper & Print

Attending the 31st Wayzgoose in Grimsby last spring therefore was a nostalgic experience for me. Two buildings of the Grimsby Public Art Gallery were full of the most amazing, creative and beautiful paper works of art imaginable. All the exhibitors were passionate about paper in general and what

they do with it in particular. They were happy to explain where they were from, what they do and why they bother.

Some, like Tim and Elke Inkster (yes, the name is unbelievably apt), owners of The Porcupine's Quill of Erin, not only make their living from their famous and fine press, they've been awarded, unusually



Tony Crowle of Van Huizen Bookbinding & Finishing of St. Catharines gave away books stamped with gold foil.



Paper treasures are celebrated at the annual Wayzgoose in Grimsby.



as a couple, the Order of Canada for their distinctive contributions to publishing in Canada.

"We've been exhibiting at Wayzgoose for about 25 years," says Tim Inkster, "probably at first because we were invited by Bill Poole, founder of the event, now deceased."

At their table last year, the Inksters exhibited a selection of recently published books including *Concord of Sweet Sounds* by wood engraver Gerard Brender à Brandis and F. David Hoeniger. The artist was also present. This book was reviewed in *Escarpment Views* in the autumn. In addition, the Inksters released their spring issue of *The Devil's Artisan*, a magazine about the printing arts that they've published twice a year since 1980.

At this year's Wayzgoose, they plan to launch *Wanderlust* by Megan Speers, a graphic novel of 50 wood-cut images that tell the story of life among punks in Sault Ste. Marie in the mid '90s.

Will Rueter, owner of The Aliquando Press of Dundas, has been exhibiting at the Wayzgoose since the very first one. "Last year I showed my 100th book, *Majesty, Order and Beauty*, excerpts from the journals of T.J. Cobden-Sanderson, one of Britain's most influential bookbinders and private printers of the late 19th century," he says. "It was nice to get some good feedback and show the public that letterpress printing is still alive."

"This year," Rueter continues, "I have two slightly less ambitious books: *Diary of an Amaryllis*, with text and drawings by my wife the artist Maureen Steuart, and *Becoming Love with Love*, three poems by the 13th century Flemish mystic Hadewijch, printed in medieval Dutch and English. It's guaranteed to be a bestseller!"

Larry Thompson of Greyweathers Press of Merrickville explains his reason for exhibiting: "The standard is high, and it gives printers like myself, who are relatively new to the game, a chance to meet and mingle with veterans of the fine press. The Grimsby Wayzgoose has pedigree, an excellent following, and organizers who value the exhibitors and treat them royally. And the opportunity to sell work and promote one's press."

Last year he and his wife and partner Holly Dean displayed a new series of lin-

ocuts and the book *The Vampire and the Seventh Daughter*, among other delightful works. At this Wayzgoose they want to launch *Graven Images: A Collection of 19th Century Wood Engravings, Newly Discovered*.

Thompson shares the story behind this work. "Two years ago, a collector loaned me a box full of 19th-century wood engravings, wondering if I could print them. I could and did, although it proved to be an ordeal. I'm finishing a portfolio of these fabulous prints, and I'm hoping that it will be well received."

Hands-on Demonstrations

Demonstrations are popular at the Wayzgoose. Tony Crowle of Van Huizen Bookbinding & Finishing of St. Catharines had one of the company's four hot foil stamping machines set up, and before I knew what was happening, I was presented with a blank hardcover book with "Escarpment Views" stamped in gold foil on the cover. The paper inside is a lovely cream-coloured laid, for those who care. Treasures are given away here.

In a small room, members of the Book Arts Guild of Richmond Hill were demonstrating with a large old treadle platen press, the Grimsby Library's Pearl Press, showing how it can print individual sheets of paper fed by hand.

Hobby or Profession?

As my university roommate and I discovered, not everyone is able to support themselves from the crafts that are celebrated at the Wayzgoose. They have other reasons for their dedication.

Thompson goes on to reveal "I started Greyweathers Press five years ago not concerning myself with the business side, but rather focusing on acquiring skills and experience. To my surprise and delight, the Press has proven a profitable addition to the rest of our art and craft work. Holly and I make our living creating and producing wholesale craft artifacts, design services, fine art and, in my case, freelance writing. It's like we have a half dozen part-time jobs, but all based out of our studio. And life is rarely dull."

This year the 32nd annual Wayzgoose will be held on April 24, again at the Grimsby Public Art Gallery. ■

Members of the Book Arts Guild of Richmond Hill demonstrated the use of the 19th-century Pearl Press, a floor standing, full-size platen press powered by a foot-operated treadle.