

REVITALIZING THE SHAKESPEARE PRESS MUSEUM

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The purpose of this study was to determine how the Shakespeare Press Museum could attract more visitors, what kind of programs the Shakespeare Press Museum can offer to those visitors and how the Shakespeare Press Museum can turn frequent and interested visitors into volunteers. The popularity of letterpress printing has grown significantly over the last few years and interest in the museum the has grown as well.

This study investigated the practices of other similar organizations and suggestions from experts with knowledge related to organizing and maintaining exhibits and knowledge of the Shakespeare Press Museum. Elite and specialized interviews were conducted in order to obtain the methodology and advice from the sources noted above. Lastly, content analysis was used to distill the most important portions of the interviews and used to make write an action plan for the student curator and faculty advisor of the Shakespeare Press Museum.

The results of this study set out a course of action for the student curator and the faculty advisor on how to rewrite the mission statement for the Shakespeare Press Museum, develop programming, attract visitors and finally turn visitors into volunteers. Following this plan will create a comprehensive and detailed statement of the purpose of the Shakespeare Press Museum as well as outline the specific duties of the student curator. This will create continuity between generations of curators and advisors to ensure that the Shakespeare Press Museum remains a productive and viable entity.

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CHAPTER I ❁ INTRODUCTION

In the last ten years there has been a revival of the once predominant technology of letterpress printing, but not for general commercial printing. Many artists began using letterpresses because many presses are small enough to fit on a table or in a garage. Also, it is more popular to print small batches of custom work with letterpress than it is to do the same with lithography. The development of letterpress photopolymer plates in the last 10 years has made obtaining custom printing plates for letterpress more convenient and more economical which has further advanced the use of letterpress for small jobs. From these advances and trends grew a large industry of small shops and people working from their homes producing letterpress wedding invitations and greeting cards. The Shakespeare Press Museum at California Polytechnic University in San Luis Obispo, California has been a repository of history and knowledge of this craft for 40 years, but is not particularly well known to the Cal Poly or letterpress communities. The museum would now like to become an active member of both these communities, in order to share the resources, techniques and history still alive at the Shakespeare Press Museum. This study asks: How do other museums and places of historical documentation attract visitors and volunteers, and how can those strategies be applied to the practices within the Shakespeare Press Museum.

The Shakespeare Press Museum is a collection of California gold rush era letterpresses and over two hundred type faces owned by the Graphic Communication Department at California Polytechnic University in San Luis Obispo. Founded in 1966, when a private collection was donated by Charles Palmer, the museum has been run by a student curator and staffed by student volunteers since its inception in 1969. Because the curator changes from school year-to-year and interest in the museum fluctuates, it is often difficult to preserve knowledge on how the day to day operations of the museum work. In the last five to ten years the museum has been focused on creating greeting cards as both a teaching method to those people new to letterpress and as a way to advertise the name of the Shakespeare Press Museum in the public. The museum currently sells a majority of its cards within the Graphic Communication Department or at an online shop

hosted at www.shakespearepress.etsy.com. These marketing channels bring very little awareness of the museum and attract few visitors or volunteers. The largest problem the museum faces is having a steady staff willing to give tours and demonstrations to visitors and to continue running the museum when a curator leaves.

The Shakespeare Press Museum needs a new method for attracting visitors and volunteers. This study will investigate the practices of other successful museums and learning institutions. The purpose of this study is to develop a plan and course of action for the student curator and faculty adviser to write a new mission statement for the museum and improve the methods that the Shakespeare Press Museum uses to attract visitors and volunteers. When this study is completed, the museum will have a guide that the curator and staff can refer to on how other museums function and how those methods could be applied to the museum's practices. The plan will suggest what activities are offered at the museum and additional ways the museum can promote its existence.

CHAPTER II ❁ LITERATURE REVIEW

The popularity of letterpress has grown significantly in the past decade and the Shakespeare Press Museum preserves the original use of this technology. Members of the Shakespeare Press Museum learn to use the historic equipment, how to set type and the history of both the museum as well as the equipment specifically, in order to give tours and demonstrations to visitors and pass on their knowledge to those who want to learn. With the growing popularity of letterpress printing in the card and book arts industries, interest in this craft has spiked. This study will evaluate the methods of other museums and volunteer based programs in attracting visitors and converting them to volunteers. “Marshall McLuhan [a communications theorist] said ‘Each new technology creates an environment that is itself regarded as corrupt and degrading, yet the new one turns its predecessor into an art form,’” writes Quentin Newark of Atelier Works, a design firm in England, in “Case Against Type” in September 2000 (Newark, 22). Newark goes on to write that when one technology is turned into art the technology preceding that one is turned into a craft. In 1990, Octavo, a UK print company, called for a rejection of “letterpress-derived-dead typography and all its attendant convention” claiming that all typography and typographic conventions derived from letterpress printing should be cast aside and forgotten (Newark, 22). Newark likens this attitude towards letterpress to “...declaring ‘the death of print’” which Newark claims is “initially thrilling but on reflection seems increasingly foolish and insubstantial” (Newark, 22). Newark believes that the call for the “rejection of ‘letterpress-derived-dead typography and all its attendant convention’” is misplaced because of the prevalence of the influence of letterpress typefaces on the digital world, explaining “[a]lmost every typeface in use today was first designed and cut for use in letterpress” (Newark, 22). Letterpress printing technology has significant value to modern day typographers and through preservation, museums like the Shakespeare Press Museum can continue to show the importance letterpress has on the typographic conventions and typefaces we use today. When this article was written, only nine years ago, Newark writes that “the end of letterpress is its labour-intensive process” and that “[t]he sheer physicality is

what puts designers off ... and to engage in it you would have to transform yourself from being a mind-worker to being an actual worker” (Newark, 23). Despite the fact that in 2000 Newark sees the inevitable fading away of letterpress he hits on exactly what will attract artists and designers to the craft in just a few years “[w]e forget that letterpress is as close as graphic design ever comes to the production of something unique” (Newark, 23). It is this that the Shakespeare Press Museum hopes to preserve. By continuing to use and demonstrate the use of letterpresses and typesetting, the museum aims to preserve this craft and to make it something less threatening and mysterious to the average person.

The growing popularity of letterpress can clearly be seen in the growing commercial demand for it. David Colman, author of “Greetings Printed as if for Christmas Past” from the November 28th, 2002 edition of the *New York Times*, writes “[a]s e-mail and other high-tech modes of communication lose their novelty, letterpress printing is enjoying a comeback as a sort of Luddite luxury” (Colman, F8). “Whether for personal stationary or for holiday cards, letterpress craftsmanship is catching on with a new generation eager for an antidote to the slick, ephemeral quality of modern correspondence” (Colman, F8). Eve Ashcraft, a Manhattan color consultant is quoted as saying “[l]etterpressed things are tactile, it makes paper an object - it changes it from planar to sculptural” (Colman, F8). The article continues to report that the demand for letterpress printing has grown as seen by the fact that at “the Printery in Oyster Bay , New York, sales of letterpress stationary have doubled over the past three years...[a]nd at the three locations of Kate’s Paperie in Manhattan, sales of letterpress products are 60 percent higher now than two years ago” (Colman, F8). Melanie Nerenberg, the marketing director of Kate’s Paperie estimates that over the last five years the number of companies or individuals supplying letterpress printing has risen 500 to 600 percent (Colman, F8). This is supported by the turn out at the annual National Stationary Show. According to a spokeswoman for the organization “there were five times as many letterpress vendors at the show this year as five years ago” (Colman, F8). Colman writes “[t]he letterpress renaissance is a clear reaction against the glut of cheap desktop published cards and stationary and offers an alternative to the most widely used formal process, engraving.” Letter-

press uses “typefaces with a playful, unceremonious quality” and therefore has a slightly “offbeat appeal” (Colman, F8). The increased interest in the art of letterpress printing has already begun to draw more visitors to the Shakespeare Press Museum. By capitalizing and catering to an already interested public, the museum can attract more visitors and volunteers.

For the designers and the craftspeople who create letterpress stationary it is about the process and the materials as much as the finished product. “Brady Vest, the owner of Hammerpress in Kansas City, Missouri, is one of a new generation of letterpress designers who is working to ensure that this graphic, labor intensive printing process survives the computer age in style,” writes Monica Michael Willis in the article “Letterpress Makes a Comeback” from the April 2007 edition of *Country Living* (Willis, 87-89). Willis writes that “letterpress stationary and art began experiencing a renaissance a decade ago, when design aficionados coozied to the retro graphics, vintage fonts, and heavy weight papers associated with the printing process” (Willis, 87-89). Willis chronicles Brady Vest’s process and he explains that “the existing type I have to work with is finite. It forces me to create my own vocabulary for the materials I have at hand” (Willis, 87-89). Brady goes on to describe the process of setting type as “an architectural process, much like a puzzle.” Willis continues to describe Brady’s process, writing “[w]hen satisfied with the layout, Brady inks the letters, feeds paper around a cylinder, then manually rolls the paper over the type, leaving an ink impression. This process is repeated to introduce additional colors and graphic elements and to create a layered effect” (Willis, 87-89). With more and more artists jumping into this process, many are looking for guidance which can be seen in the growing popularity of letterpress classes. “Paul Moxon, a consultant, designer and printer in Birmingham, Ala., who owns Fameorshame Press,” recently had two classes at the San Francisco Center for the Book on how to letterpress print sell out (Carr, A-12). The Shakespeare Press Museum has always been a place where one could learn the art of letterpress printing and has experienced success with classes. Developing and advertising these classes could become a great tool in attracting people to the museum. The potential for discounts available to members or volunteers could encourage many workshop participants to invest more time in the museum.

Assuming the museum can begin to attract more visitors, there will need to be programs in place for the visitors. Volunteers will be essential to this and more importantly, volunteers with knowledge and expertise in the programs offered by the museum, whether that be tours, demonstrations or hands-on teaching. The study “The Role of Learning in the Development of Expertise in Museum Docents” by Robin S. Grenier at the University of Connecticut discusses the ways in which museum docents become experts in their fields. The study acknowledged that in many volunteer-based programs docents, “preparation is brief or insufficient for the demands of the job,” which is very true in the Shakespeare Press Museum where learning is often self-motivated and dependent on the enthusiasm of the volunteer (Grenier, 142). In many museums and especially the Shakespeare Press Museum, “[m]useum staff, including docents, have a positive influence on the experiences of visitors, especially if staff are well trained,” therefore it is especially important that those volunteers charged with interacting with the public be well trained and engaging (Grenier, 143). The study goes on to examine how expert docents become experts and found that the process is generally a combination of formal training, continual education, and several types of informal and incidental learning. The study interviewed expert docents from several types of museums and found that whether the training process was minimal or very thorough, most docents felt they did the most learning from informal and incidental sessions (Grenier, 148-150). The study broke these informal learning sessions into three categories: learning from others, learning by doing and self-directed learning. Learning from others involved shadowing more experienced docents and going on other docents’ tours. Many docents found they “developed their own knowledge and skills as docents through observation, shadowing, and modeling” and felt that it was much easier to begin to create a personal style after observing other docents first (Grenier, 149-150). This style of learning has long been the way Shakespeare Press Museum

volunteers have been trained on using the equipment, but not for giving tours. Integrating this with more formal training on how to give a tour will help create knowledgeable and engaging docents for the Shakespeare Press Museum. The idea of learn by doing is another method often employed in the Shakespeare Press Museum. In the study, docents expressed that “[n]o matter how much training and preparation they received, all the docents described a need to get out there and just do it,” a system the Shakespeare Press Museum often forces on its volunteers. Part of getting out there, was practicing in front of a group of friends and family or other docents. The Shakespeare Press Museum could have practice sessions where new volunteers have to give a tour, do a demonstration or teach part of the process to a senior volunteer. The last learning method was self-directed learning. This involved actively searching out material beyond the training material to further educate oneself about the museum and the history surrounding it (Grenier, 151). The Shakespeare Press Museum has a large library that could be a huge asset to those volunteers interested in learning more. By establishing a checkout system, the museum could facilitate this effective learning method for its volunteers.

CHAPTER III ❁ RESEARCH METHODS & PROCEDURES

The Shakespeare Press Museum is always looking for more ways to raise awareness of collection and tours. This study will examine the practices of other museums and evaluate what procedures and methods were successful for other similar institutions. For this project I used elite and specialized interviewing and content analysis. Elite and specialized interviews require interviewing professionals and experts in a field of study and engaging these people in conversations focused around questions targeting an individual's focus of study (Levenson, 22). It is best to avoid leading questions, either/or questions and "why" questions. Asking open ended questions yields the best results and encourages the interviewee to openly discuss his or her point of view. This gives the interviewer a true understanding of the interviewee's perspective (Levenson, 23). I interviewed three people from three different types of organizations whose focus is preservation of historical material and display of that material. Each person was approached separately and given the option of how they would best like to be interviewed. Then, they were interviewed in person and over the phone. The people were Catherine Trujillo from Special Collections in Kennedy Library at California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo, California, Mark Barbour from the International Printing Museum in Carson, California and Karen Kile from The Art Center in San Luis Obispo, California. The following are the interview questions asked:

- What is your job title, responsibilities?
- What is the focus/purpose of your organization? preserve or display?
- How do you attract visitors?
- What kind of activities or displays do you provide for visitors?
- If you have volunteers, how do you get people to volunteer?
- How much training do your volunteers receive?
- Can you explain the training process?

- With your knowledge of the Shakespeare Press Museum, what recommendations do you have for attracting visitors?
- What do you recommend the museum have available for visitors
- What recommendations do you have for the museum to help it attract volunteers?

This survey provided the Shakespeare Press Museum with areas to focus its efforts in advertising the museum as well as in what to do with visitors and volunteers once they come to the museum.

Lastly, I used content analysis to interpret and quantify the information gathered from the elite and specialized interviews. Content analysis quantifies qualitative information, such as interview answers (Levenson, 27). Once the interviews were conducted, they were evaluated for the information most beneficial to the Shakespeare Press Museum. I created a list of how often certain topics were mentioned by each interviewee when answering those questions. Using that list and the suggestions from the interviewees, I created a plan for how the museum should approach the re-organization of the daily running of the museum.

CHAPTER IV ❁ RESULTS

The following are the results of three interviews conducted with individuals both familiar with the Shakespeare Press Museum and who work at similar organizations. These interviews were conducted over the phone and in person. Each interview was conducted using specific questions, however the interviewee was allowed and encouraged to follow trains of thought and open the discussion to subjects beyond the questions. The following is the summarized results of those interviews.

Catherine Trujillo

Catherine Trujillo's official title is Library Assistant for Special Collections at Kennedy Library at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, however in that role she performs many duties. As an employee of Special Collections she assists in the management of the unique collection of primary source material available for research purposes that specifically reflects the curriculum at Cal Poly. She is also in charge of the Library's exhibit program. In that capacity, Trujillo documents, cultivates and informs the Cal Poly community as well as the wider San Luis Obispo Community of the exhibits available in the library.

Special Collections' main focus is to gather, preserve and make available primary source material that complements the academia at Cal Poly. The mission statement clearly states this:

“Special Collections acquires, preserves, interprets, and provides access to primary research materials in their original formats, including books, manuscripts, archives, and other items, in support of the educational and research activities of the Cal Poly academic community, visiting scholars, and the research community at large” (*The Kennedy Library Family of Sites*).

The purpose of the exhibits follows this closely. The exhibits are meant to highlight the current scholarship of faculty and students at Cal Poly and engage many departments. The exhibits appeal to the campus wide community as well as the larger community of San Luis Obispo.

1. How do you attract visitors?

Special Collections engages in faculty outreach in order to remind faculty of the resources available, who will hopefully inform students of the resources available. Special Collections also keeps in touch with faculty in order to keep updated on the specific curriculum of Cal Poly, thereby keeping the collection useful and relevant. Special Collections also uses its web site to attract visitors by allowing them to search for materials before coming to the library. It is also the main way Special Collections disseminates current information and makes material available.

The exhibits attract visitors by focusing on a specific target audience, the Cal Poly campus, and tailoring the exhibits towards that audience. The shows support student and faculty work and rely on word of mouth to spread news of the exhibit. The wider San Luis Obispo community is involved through advertising via local publications such as the *New Times*.

2. What kind of activities or displays do you provide visitors?

The actual research material and the help to find said material is a huge draw of visitors to Special Collections. Employees of Special Collections make class presentations to educate Cal Poly students on the material available in Special Collections. Special Collections also sponsors talks, often in conjunction with the exhibition program. The exhibits themselves serve as a big draw to the Kennedy Library and to Special Collections as well as the workshops offered in conjunction with the exhibit program.

3. If you have volunteers, how do you get people to be volunteers?

People usually approach Special Collections because they have a project or interest in mind already. Special Collections volunteers go through Cal Poly's volunteer program and through that often receive extra perks. Currently each Special Collections volunteer has a specific assignment.

4. Can you explain the training process volunteers receive?

All volunteers get basic training in preservation and archival technique basics. They also get trained on the catalog system in place. Volunteers then begin training on the specific project

they will be working on. The amount of training will depend on the project and the volunteers previous knowledge.

5. With your knowledge of the Shakespeare Press Museum, what recommendations do you have for the museum attracting visitors?

Get better signage. Either in the form of sandwich boards, posters, or general marketing strategies. The name, location and purpose of the museum needs to be made more prominent on the Cal Poly campus. The web site needs to be used more frequently and used as a marketing tool to let visitors know what is available at the museum and when it is available. Doing more print work for faculty and other organizations will help raise campus awareness of the existence of the museum. Make sure the Shakespeare Press “brand” is on everything that is printed and distributed. Lastly, garner faculty support so that they can then inform their students.

6. What do you recommend the Shakespeare Press Museum have available for visitors?

Tours is the best and easiest thing. Hands-on workshops will get people interested and promote the mission of the museum. Make both the archive and history repository available to people. Have all these areas clearly defined for people working at the museum and visitors walking in. Make sure all of these areas have a specific focus and goal and make sure that is clear to visitors, potentially through a brochure.

7. What recommendations do you have for the Shakespeare Press Museum to help it attract volunteers?

Offer membership and really make it clear what membership means. Require dues, either in the form of money or time. Use terms such as enrollment. Make sure members have perks, such as access to use the press either before others or only allow members to access the press. Allow members to attend workshops for less or for free. Make sure to emphasize perks. Market the museum by advertising the members program and networking with similar organizations on and off campus. Campaign for members. Potentially look into official museum accreditation through the American Association of Museums and the California Association of Museums and become an official non-profit.

Lastly, define the mission of the museum so that it is easy to assign tasks and jobs to volunteers as they join the museum. Give volunteers specific jobs, titles or responsibilities.

Mark Barbour

Mark Barbour is the Executive Director and Curator of the International Printing Museum in Carson, California. As a founder and a member of a very small staff, Barbour's responsibilities encompass many aspects of running the museum. He has a large role in the direction the museum will head towards, the general concepts, the exhibits and programs, marketing campaigns, board activities, management of the collection, research, writing, communication with members through newsletters etc., general maintenance and everything else.

The International Printing Museum's motto is: "preservation through education." They achieve this by making use of the collection of printing presses and other materials and equipment, through classes and workshops. The museum uses the exhibits as a spring board into American history and through classes and school presentations, the museum uses the collection to support K-12 curriculum in the area and teach about science, invention, history, civics, physiology and more. The museum has also built a community around it that uses the exhibits. Most donors do not want to simply save printing for the sake of printing, but are willing to save something that is dynamic and alive.

1. How do you attract visitors?

The International Printing Museum educates about 2500 students a year through tours of the museum and the travelling printing press and Ben Franklin actor sent to schools all over the Los Angeles area. About 80 percent of those students are 5th graders because the history of the collection fits well with 5th grade history curriculum focused on American history around the founding fathers time. Once the museum has worked with a school or teacher once, they often will continue to work with them for many years. Teachers like the program and it easily fits curriculum and field trip requirements. For middle school students the presentation is more about civics and the role of the printing press. High school and college students often visit to learn

about typography, design or even library sciences.

The general public is a smaller percentage of the visitors the museum receives. In general, not a lot of money is spent by the public to see museums. Also, due to the nature of the type of museum the International Printing Museum is, the exhibits rarely change and therefore it is difficult to bring in a visitor more than once. The museum has Open Hours for the general public and advertises these in newspapers, magazines, tourist organization publications as well as on the radio.

2. What kind of activities or displays do you provide for visitors?

The school tours and presentations are a huge part of the services offered by the International Printing Museum. The museum obviously provides on site tours of the collection as well as tours of the collection actually working during open hours on Saturdays and during the week by appointment.

To attract repeat visitors, the museum has special events. These include the Dickens Holiday Celebration, 4th of July celebrations, Constitution Day and Family Days. During these events, the museum has presses working, sometimes special theme classes and a chance for visitors to learn some history of the time period, holiday or equipment.

The International Printing Museum has also recently started a Book Arts Institute that offers classes in the use of the presses and book making techniques. Related to this, the museum is also considering offering open studio hours where the equipment would be available to be used.

3. If you have volunteers, how do you get people to volunteer for the International Printing Museum?

The International Printing Museum has a volunteer group called the Leather Apron Docents. This group consists of 10-20 regular volunteers that mainly come in on Saturdays. These volunteers work in the collection, on special activities, in the warehouse, as printers, teach classes and in the library or anywhere else they are needed. Volunteers are often visitors who never leave. The question of why someone chooses to be a volunteer is difficult and has many answers. People volunteer in order to feel a sense of value, share knowledge, for a social connection, in order to

work on the machines or are hobby printers who want access to knowledge about printing available at the museum. To get volunteers, it is important to understand a person's motivation for deciding to volunteer and cater to that interest.

4. How much training do volunteers receive?

When a volunteer begins at the museum, they are matched to a job by the skill set they already possess. They are sometimes used to teach classes, but the staff are the main tour givers. This is due to the fact that the classes and tours require a certain theatrical ability that not all volunteers possess. Volunteers are, however, used to tell the stories of individual presses.

5. Can you explain the training process?

Since volunteers are matched to their jobs based on previous skill and knowledge, little training is done. Volunteers who work with the general public are trained in the history and scripts related to the activity they are showcasing.

Note: The answers to the all three of the last questions were answered and expanded in the last half of the interview with Mr. Barbour. The following organizes the thoughts and ideas that came from that discussion into related groups. The discussion also went beyond the scope of the initial questions, however is still relevant to those questions and will be included here. The three questions that spawned this discussion are: 1. With your knowledge of the Shakespeare Press Museum, what recommendations do you have for it to attract visitors? 2. What do you recommend the museum have available for visitors and 3. What recommendations do you have for the museum to help it attract volunteers?

For attracting both visitors and volunteers, the first step is to evaluate the museum's strengths and weaknesses. The museum needs to be a very established and functioning organization before it can start to bring in a lot of outside people. The museum is made up of several legs or areas that the museum offers. The museum has its own unique heritage and history, but it can also be used to illustrate and talk about American history. The museum also attracts people who are interested and passionate about the equipment, but they need a driving force to motivate

them to act within the museum. All of this must be thought out and made sturdy before visitors should be invited to come in and participate in these areas. The commitment of the advisor is very important, because they are the one who will ensure that the transition between student curators is smooth. The advisor provides continuity throughout the years. This is not to say that selection of the curator is not important. In order for progress to happen at the museum, the curator must have passion and motivation, they need to be trained and possibly compensated with a small stipend in order to encourage consistency and commitment. The curator position should be specifically spelled out with a list of duties, goals and daily, weekly, and monthly duties. To get to this level, the current curator and committed staff and the advisor should sit down and brainstorm the strengths and weaknesses, how those can be built upon or improved as needed, and how this system can accommodate a transitional curator.

After truly evaluating what the museum does best and what areas are going to be improved and expanded, then actual planning of what should be offered to visitors and volunteers can be discussed and decided. What can the museum offer local schools, how does the collection highlight areas of history? Start by looking into the 4th grade curriculum that focuses on California history, and working with the History department, start to write a script that examines key points in California history that center around a press, such as Mark Twain, gold mining, and the boom of west coast newspapers. Offer this as a potential field trip to local schools and start building a group of committed teachers who will bring students back year after year.

In regards to specifics to attract visitors, build on the Cal Poly community. Promote the museum regularly, especially in other departments such as Art and Design, History, English, and Journalism. Take advantage of the growing popularity letterpress has among the book arts community. Make the museum a gathering place for a book arts group in the San Luis Obispo area. Offer a monthly meeting where members can work on projects, hear a guest lecturer, have show and tell of projects or ideas and offer workshops.

Take advantage of free points of publication such as local newspapers. Also begin to look into areas in the community where the museum can get its name out such as, home school

children, YMCA and community centers. Update the web site constantly, look into distributing printed material about the museum, potentially make a DVD about the museum. Offer specific times when people can come in a get a very specific tour and demonstrate key pieces of the collection. Have people set their names or an image, have a very quick demo. Also, start family days where families are invited to come do a project at the museum like paper-making, book binding or paper marbling.

A good way to get general support for the museum is to support the Graphic Communication department as well as the Administration at Cal Poly or other departments. What can the museum do to make other people look good? Keep the museum relevant to the Graphic Communication department, so that it is a valued treasure and not a space waster. Be sure to justify the museum constantly, and clearly define the purpose and mission of the museum. Document visitors, and visitor comments, the “wow” factor of the museum as well as the support it has gained in the community. Also be sure to be a presence on the campus. Can the museum print a card to be sent out to the Cal Poly Foundation donors for the Administration, or print something during International Printing Week and get its name out more.

Once more visitor traffic begins to happen, and an awareness of the museum is established, volunteers will start to come from repeat visitors and people who love the museum instantly and do not want to leave. Volunteers can be taken from the book arts group noted earlier, as well as students who show particular interest. The museum could also host a work weekend, where it invites printers from either the Los Angeles area or from San Jose and San Francisco areas to come down for a weekend and help the museum organize, and sort those items that are rare and need to be protected or repaired. This will help expand the Shakespeare Press Museum’s name beyond San Luis Obispo and help to integrate it into the larger letterpress printing community.

Lastly, with the potential influx of people to the museum, the collection itself needs to be protected and taken care of. The security of the collection should be considered, and who has general access needs to be evaluated. Important and rare typefaces need to be taken out of circu-

lation to prevent damage. Also, anyone who has the privilege to work with the type and on the presses needs to be thoroughly and properly trained so that they don't hurt themselves or damage the equipment.

Karen Kile

Karen Kile is the Executive Director of the San Luis Obispo Art Center in San Luis Obispo, California. As Executive Director, she is hired by the board of directors and therefore her responsibilities encompass everything. She is in charge of planning and managing the collection as well as all the other duties required to run a museum.

The mission of the San Luis Obispo Art Center is “to provide diverse visual arts experiences for people of all ages and backgrounds through exhibition, education, creation and collaboration. The Art Center’s Permanent Collection conserves an artistic legacy on the California Central Coast” (*Home of the San Luis Obispo Art Center*).

1. How do you attract visitors?

The location is great. It is in downtown San Luis Obispo, next to the Mission and in an area of a lot of foot traffic, however the Art Center has recently been reevaluating how they themselves can attract more people. Through analysis, the Art Center has determined that its name is somewhat ambiguous of what is inside. People are unsure if there is an art collection or if it is an area for artists to gather and create and therefore are often intimidated to enter.

The other main way the Art Center attracts visitors is through the exhibits and programming the Art Center offers. This includes when they bring in out of town artists for talks, live music, collaborations with other organizations as well as tours and classes for both children and adults.

2. What kind of activities do you provide for visitors?

The activities were mentioned in the answer to the previous question.

3. If you have volunteers, how do you get people to volunteer?

The Art Center has volunteers that help with the collection and at special events sponsored by the Art Center. The Art Center holds a volunteer campaign every two to three years by advertising on KCBX, a local public radio station, and craigslist.org.

4. How much training do your volunteers receive?

Every new volunteer has a one on one interview to determine their interest and areas of knowledge and expertise. From there they are placed where they fit best. Currently the handbook for volunteers is being rewritten, but will be available soon.

5. Can you explain the training process?

The training process starts with the interview to find out the interest of the volunteer. The volunteer given a general walkthrough of the museum and is then assigned a mentor who they follow around and shadow until they are comfortable in their own. If the volunteer sticks around, they are put into rotation and are called when help is needed.

6. With your knowledge of the Shakespeare Press Museum, what recommendations do you have for attracting visitors?

The Shakespeare Press Museum should consider what the current name tells visitors. Is it a name that attracts people to come visit or confuses? The name should emphasis that it is a museum and stick with visitors. The name currently doesn't say anything about the museum, where it is or what kind of museum it is.

Use big campus events like Open House and Parents' weekend to get visitors in the museum. Also offering press time to artists will attract people looking to learn more about letterpress. Lastly, make sure the tag line for the museum is printed on every card or printed material that comes out of the museum, so people see where letterpress printing can come from.

7. What do you recommend the museum have available for visitors

This question was answered primarily with the above question.

8. What recommendations do you have for the museum to help it attract volunteers?

The Shakespeare Press Museum should look into ways of gaining volunteers from programs in place on the Cal Poly campus. The Osher Life Long Learning Program invites community members, specifically retirees and semi-retirees onto campus to take classes, workshops and activities and it may be possible to offer a workshop through in the Shakespeare Press Museum to the Osher program and then inform those people that volunteering is an option.

Another way is to offer a program or classes to nurture people who have a interest and teach them gradually, give them ownership of the museum and cultivate a group of volunteers from those people. Volunteers need to be treated as a member of the Shakespeare Press Museum family and be built up and nurtured.

Lastly, involve the Cal Poly community. Is it possible to sponsor a talk or exhibit with another campus organization like the student gallery? Involve faculty and educate them on the existence of the museum so they can educate their students.

Content Analysis Tabulations

Advertisement through local avenues	4
Using the Cal Poly community to build awareness	13
Update the web site	6
Hold special events such as talks, workshops, classes and activities to attract repeat visitors	13
Volunteers are often visitors who decide never to leave: cultivate people who already have an interest	5
Volunteers need to be made to feel valuable and as an integral part of the team	4
Volunteers are best when they are matched to a task that they have knowledge and interest in already	8
Evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses will help the Shakespeare Press Museum focus efforts	3
Involve other campus departments and entities to promote the museum	10
Clearly define the offerings of the museum for staff and visitors	7
Try to involve the wider San Luis Obispo community	6
Offer clearly stated, and defined membership to the museum and include perks to that membership	6
Define roles for everyone involved in the museum	3
Cultivate volunteers from classes and workshops	10

CHAPTER V ❁ CONCLUSIONS

The Shakespeare Press Museum is a resource unlike any other. However, a resource is not very useful or valuable if it is not used. The Shakespeare Press Museum has the potential to be a truly beneficial institution to both the Cal Poly campus as well as to the wider letterpress community. The current situation at the museum is constantly fluctuating due the consistent turnover of the student curator and the lack of a plan and general purpose for the existence of the museum. The following is plan of action for the Shakespeare Press Museum based on the interviews conducted and the content analysis of those interviews. This plans highlights four main areas the student curator and faculty advisor need to focus on over the next year and will establish a system for continuing the course of action decided on when new staff joins the museum.

The first step is to define the mission statement of the Shakespeare Press Museum. This will give focus and guidance to all the following steps. This is when the strengths and weaknesses need to be evaluated and discussed. What does the museum already do well and where can it improve? What are some areas that the museum currently does not do well in at all and should the staff continue doing those activities? Will the museum focus on education or preservation or both? Once the mission statement is defined, it needs to be documented and clearly stated for all current staff. It also needs to be preserved, so that future members of the Shakespeare Press Museum know exactly what is expected from the work done in the museum.

The next step is to decide, based on the mission statement, what activities and services the museum will offer its guests and volunteers. This can include actual classes and workshops on letterpress printing, book making techniques and other activities associated with printing. Another aspect to consider, is whether or not the presses will be available for use by anyone or only by people who specifically work for the museum. The museum could offer tours, either during open hours or by appointment. There could be one general tour or several types of tours based on who is present.

The other issue to consider is what kind of benefits will a member of the Shakespeare

Press Museum receive. Reasons to be a member might include being able to use the presses for free or a reduced cost, free or reduced cost workshops and classes and access to more knowledge about letterpress printing.

Once these decisions are made, both in regards to visitors and volunteers, they will need to be recorded and preserved in a way that can be passed from curator to curator and from faculty advisor to advisor. This could be a manual both printed and in digital form. Also, the more this information is made publicly available, either via a brochure or online, the more likely it will be preserved as staff changes.

The third step, once detailed plans and procedures are in place, is to advertise the museum and everything it has to offer. The best place to start is on Cal Poly and begin to involve the faculty and students. This is the primary target audience for the museum and ways to get the campus more involved need to be brainstormed and implemented year after year. Collaboration with other departments will help to broaden the awareness of the museum, which will help promotion among students. A planned and thought-out yearly membership campaign will help bring in new people. Also, once a strategy for advertising is developed fully, it can be recorded and passed down from year to year.

The Shakespeare Press Museum can also start advertising in the San Luis Obispo Community through public radio and local newspapers. Establishing the museum, through its workshops and classes, as a place where people can come learn the art of letterpress will build the museum's reputation in the art community and attract more visitors already interested in the craft. Another place to begin advertising in the community, is at local schools. Once a tour is in place that caters to young children, schools can be invited to come for a field trip to the museum.

The last area that needs great improvement is the website. This is a critical component in advertising the museum. In a digital age, a website is essential to attracting, educating and informing visitors and volunteers alike. The museum currently has a website, however it has never been consistently updated and is now several years out of date. A system needs to be set up to update the website at least when open hours change and special events are being held in the

museum. The website has the potential to become a repository of information about the museum, the equipment and other general practices. This task of updating should be the responsibility of the curator, however if they do not possess the skills, arrangements can be made to delegate this task.

The last step would be to turn visitors into volunteers. Volunteers are necessary for the programs the museum will have available. The volunteer program needs to be spelled out specifically. Some have suggested creating a membership program for the museum. A member would have certain privileges, such as the ability to use the press, take workshops at a reduced rate and have more access to the museum. In return, members would be required to give back to the museum in the form of dues or volunteers hours. Volunteers could also be assigned specific tasks, to give them purpose and focus. Volunteers interested in tours could be trained to give them, while volunteers interested in other aspects of the museum could be assigned tasks such as cataloging, scanning fonts or updating the web site.

There is a lot of potential in the Shakespeare Press Museum and with a set goal and method for achieving those goals, that potential can be reached. The advice from other organizations has provided many good suggestions, and ways to go about turning the museum into a true place of exhibition, teaching, and preservation.

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