A four-day celebration of the changing book begins with a hands-on look at all that’s new—and beloved about the old—in our industry.

The Oakdale Campus kicks off The Changing Book Conference where the outdoor tent show proves to be a delightfully eclectic event in which a couple hundred book enthusiasts chat about various aspects of the book. The Tent Show provides four exhibits and over twenty-five book craft and materials demonstrations. Nearby is an informative tour of the Oakdale Paper Making Facility.

A walking tour of some of Iowa City’s little jewels include its diverse bookstores, private binderies and studios. Taking an unmarked passageway dubbed “Oakland Alley,” participants just might spot local artisans hard at work in these little stops: Black Bird Bindery, Cheryl Jacobsen Calligraphy, Larry Yerkes Bindery and Naughty Dog Press.

The opening exhibit at the Iowa Artisans Gallery honors William Anthony who was the University of Iowa’s first book conservator. His diligent work in preserving the bookbinding craft is honored with the opening of an exhibit, “Bill Anthony: Lineage of a Master,” which is made possible—and demonstrates his resounding influence on many professional artists and craftsmen in the world of hand bookbinding.

WSUI features three participants of the Changing Book Conference during its live Friday morning Talk of Iowa broadcast. Shown in the photo: Parchment maker Jesse Meyer, Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler (Chief of the Document Conservation Laboratory, National Archives and Records Administration), and Larry Yerkes (bookbinder, teacher and University of Iowa Museum Curator).
—by contributions from 35 bookbinders. Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler, opening keynote speaker, explores the differences and similarities of *Craft Binding in Chicago and Iowa*. She leads us through the connections between Chicago and Iowa and between the social movements and production settings of bookwork in the first half of the 20th century.

Following the lecture, Fritz James, President of LBS Archival Products and great-grandson of Ernst Hertzberg who started the Hertzberg Bindery, is recognized for his donation to the University of Iowa’s Main Library’s Special Collections department and company’s role in the conference. A special collections exhibit follows, showcasing the lineage and heritage in The Hertzberg Bindery collection of scrapbooks, decorated papers and a fine collection of books and company archives demonstrating “The Business of Bookbinding in Iowa: 1930-1950.”

An additional exhibit, “Bookbinding Across Time and Culture,” curated by University of Iowa Conservators Gary Frost and Kristin Alana Baum, illustrates the benefits of using bookbinding models—instead of actual historical bindings—to more freely demonstrate a book’s mechanics and structure. Conference participants also observe the repair and rebinding of rare books at the Conservation Lab.

Experts extolling the continuation and prosperity of printed books intermingle historical cases with modern technology to propel further understanding of continuing paradigm for conservation and bookcrafting. Don Etherington’s *Historical Background of Book Conservation* presentation reviews the past 40 years, from the 1966 Florence flood to the development of institutional collections in the second half of the century.

*The Kennicott Bible: A Description of Its Illumination & Conservation Problems* by Chris Clarkson examines the 1400’s Hebrew Bible of Moorish Spain. Chris details the physical features, which include an extremely rare box-binding and conservation treatments performed including issues with decorative layer consolidation and binding stabilization.

The next session, *Continuing Research Value of Print Collections*, features Yvonne Carignan who reports on, *Who Wants Yesterday’s Papers?* The faculty and students of the University of Maryland answer in a 2002 debate about the future of print collections on campus. Yvonne presents the mixed responses with some faculty dependent on electronic resources and others dependent on print collections, however, there was concurrence for access to both books and electronic resources.

Walter Cybulski follows by exploring *e-Miles to Go and Promises to Keep* in an assessment of digital media’s impact on traditional libraries which concluded that the library’s future is directly related to the future of the printed book and the future of libraries is a much greater issue.

In the *Continuing Role of the Print Book*, Kate Hayles contends books have been forced to change their content strategies in reaction to “trauma” from newer emerging media. The soul of the book responds to the encroachment of the foreign media of electronic communication.
Sarah H. Townsend and Kim White in *Electronic Book Technologies* set up the topic framework then open it up for wider discussion relating to the areas of preservation, standardization and literacy. They examine the qualities of equivalence in a perceptive review while navigating their “End[of]Paper” reference website. Mass market publications, textbooks, collaborative and critical works and ephemeral manifest an electronic, non-paper presence through e-technology—blogs, wikis and ebooks.

The panel, *Bookcraft Education* by Chela Metzger, Mark Andersson, Anna Embree and Julie Leonard, discusses the differences, similarities and benefits of today’s more widely embraced educational programs versus past traditional apprenticeships. The Kilgarlin Center for Preservation of the Cultural Record, the North Bennet Street School of Bookbinding, the University of Alabama Book Arts Program and the University of Iowa Center for the Book are profiled.

Next, the panel of Bill Minter, Larry Yerkes, Mark Essler and Sally Key expounds on *Bill Anthony’s Impact on Apprentices*. Bill Minter, Bill Anthony’s first apprentice, leads the discussion about Mr. Anthony’s valiant efforts to keep book-binding apprenticeships alive and the lasting impact of those endeavors. It is a special treat to have Bill Anthony’s wife, children and grandchildren join us at the “William Anthony: Fine Binder” exhibit at the University of Iowa Museum of Art. Through the exhibit and publication of the same name, attendees receive a comprehensive look at the book art and book craft of this beloved pioneer.

John Dean gives his *World View of Book Conservation*. Facing political and environmental difficulties in other areas of the world, Western advancements in conservation bring hope to other countries by way of training and development. He describes the jeopardy of collections and librarians at risk during war and disaster around the globe and illustrates the assessment and preservation of a collection of antiphonals in a Cathedral Library.

Four speakers address the topic, *Change in the Perception of the Book*. Jim Canary first details efforts in digitizing sacred texts, developing digital Tibetan fonts, print-on-demand, Pothi texts, Tibetan libraries and preservation efforts in *From Pothi to Pixels and Back Again: The Tibetan Book*. His preview from his documentary video on Tibetan book production leads us into the workshop to experience the activities of hand block printing and the speed and agility of the handwork.

Book designer DJ Stout then breaks from the classic model in creating meticulously designed books that communicate vibrantly and effectively with the reader which he explains in his presentation of the *Role of Book Design in the Changing Book*. DJ is dedicated to good design in book format and uses typography, illustration, historical and contemporary graphics that result in his successful book designs.

In *Book Conservation and the Book Arts*, Pamela Spitzmueller shares books and book treatments to help conservators plan their work and gives those who make new books inspiration and insight. Pam illustrates through her own work that disasters to books invigorate book art and where book art was saved by historic book conservation.

Tim Ely’s *From Signal to Noise* offers participants information about interpreting embedded imagery and connotations in history and in book arts. He does not propose community building but describes his own propensities. Citing the human capacity to construe pattern from random
noise, he catalogs the kind of denials that he must make to convince viewers that his drawings are not personalized communications.

The next topic, *Impact of the Changing Book on Preservation*, is first addressed by Jeanne Drewes in *Publishing Trends in Alkaline Paper*. Surveys based on simple assessment spot testing prior to alkalization indicates that the trend to alkaline papers continues overall, but only US publishers of scholarly monographs can be depended on for consistent, persistent use of such stock.

Roberta Pilette demonstrates the benefits of a team approach to broad-spectrum preservation efforts; conservators being just one part of the equation in *Book Conservation within Library Preservation* can focus on item treatment while the overall program benefits from a productive specialist.

The final session addresses the fast moving industries of printing and binding books on-demand in *Responding to the On-Demand Society*. As the business of library binding began to decline, Jim Larsen explains how his traditional library bindery made the transition to automated on-demand book production in the oration *Historical Background for Print/Bind on Demand*.

Paul Parisi, authoritarian on the automation of library binding, discusses quality standards for new technologies, digital imaging for on-demand publishers and how the “package” still counts in marketing a successful book in *Whole Book Production with the New Technologies*.

Susan Peterson informs participants how the virtual format has changed in the past five years and what it’s E-volving into with regard to risks and rewards with *E-books on Demand*. She highlights that the publishing industries have always “followed the readers,” producing formats and products that correspond with changing reading behaviors.

The University of Iowa Center for the Book Open House of its Fine Press, Type Kitchen and Kolarik Bookbinding Studio prompts the thought of the physical impact of the traditional book in a reader’s hand. Although there is a constant call and purpose for the Changing Book and new media, there continues to be a strong calling to hold and read the traditional book as we have known it through many generations.

To conclude the conference, some choose a motor coach tour to LBS Archival Products. Others choose a local tour to the University of Iowa Historical Printing Studio or the Linotype Museum in Denmark, Iowa.

The tour starts at the Des Moines facilities that house Fritz James’ three companies, beginning at the LBS administrative offices and Corporate Image division that creates presentation materials for leading corporations. After a buffet luncheon, we walk through the perennial garden path adjoining the buildings and enter Archival Products to witness the production and order fulfillment processes of elegant preservation enclosures. We also observe the conversion of reinforcement materials for LBS Book Components division. At another building, where the main LBS Book Components is located, participants learn about the equipment and materials that go into producing endpapers and the conversion of book cloth.

This concludes our tour and the Changing Book Conference. Iowa City provided an idyllic setting for learning, sharing and growing. Our most sincere thanks to all involved.
**Book Sculpture, Defined**

by Wendy Gray

**Introduction**

Peggy Johnston is a sculptor—a book sculptor. Painstakingly constructing each of her creations, Peggy often uses bizarre materials, such as grape leaves found on a vacation and unexpected casings like river stones, bat wings or pastries. Sound interesting? There's more… Entirely dedicated to this craft, Peggy has printed, pulped, poured, painted, pasted, woven, sewn and even cast her own paper. Each of the 1,400-plus books Peggy has created is hand-numbered and carries her own logo. Peggy knows each one of them intimately, for she created them as individual works of art.

The Setting

Working from a well-equipped studio, show area, paper storage facility and print shop right in her home, Peggy adamantly contends the artistry of a book can be much more remarkable than its contents. However, her coast-to-coast clients often commission Peggy to create housing for their most meaningful memoirs—weddings, personal journals, vacation keepsakes and even movie ticket stubs; Peggy fashions those from theater posters.

**The History**

“Ever since I was young, I have had a strange passion for paper and containers,” Peggy admits. “And since people know about that obsession, they are always giving me samples of unique paper and materials they find.”

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**Entries from the Bat Log, Limited Edition**

Bat wing pages open to reveal 10 original drawings in this Vademecum book. Peggy cut and scored each page by hand. The book features handset, letterpress printing and Peggy’s drawings based on real bat sightings in her house. (And she actually still lives in that house despite these sightings!) The leather cover is even lined with a copy of her actual bat log. Peggy says, “This book is intimate and humorous, just like our bat encounters were!”

**Turquoise Rock with Fishing Fly, from the River Rock Series, One-of-a-Kind book**

Inspiration: “When fly-fishing in rocky rivers, the fly is frequently lost from being caught among the river rocks.” This book’s closure is a de-barbed fly on a cord that wraps around the rock and fastens to a small quartz bead. Peggy sews accordion-folded joss paper to a strap on the inside of the rock. She then adds brass wire curlicues to provide an element of sound for the book and handmade Granite paper to cover the outside.
“It eventually got to the point where I couldn’t use all of this paper I’d accumulated by just making greeting cards so I got into binding books; that way I could use a lot more of it up,” Peggy acknowledges.

The Ideas

From where do all of her remarkable ideas come? Peggy seems to have an endless flow. To organize her thoughts, she doesn’t use an electronic database or keep a list somewhere on her laptop. Instead, Peggy has what she calls Idea Books, all fashioned in black-and-white Japanese paper with bright red ribbons. Her Idea Books are bursting with handwritten notes, business cards, clippings, drawings, formulas and paper samples. Some pages even have tabs at the top, which Peggy quickly and easily maneuvers to reference, say, a project she did three years ago.

“I’ll often get calls from people wanting me to create books similar to those I did for them months—even years—ago,” Peggy says. “The easiest way for me to recall all of the details is to refer back to my Idea Books. There, I’ve got all of the elements that went into the project: from swatches of the materials and the particular binding structure I used to exactly how much time I logged on the project. Storing that kind of detail on a computer just isn’t possible.”

Toting her Idea Books to the art shows and exhibits she regularly attends, Peggy eagerly shares them with interested parties, explaining how they are literally her building blocks. In addition to housing the foundations of her work, being a creative inspiration and her professional reference, the books are all the same size and format for a reason. Sometimes, she stacks them onto each other in Stonehenge-like formations or fans the books out next to each other, just for fun. “I have six of them now; a couple more and I’ll have a complete circle,” Peggy smiles.

The Teachings

Asked how she came to call book sculpture her profession, Peggy humbly says, “It’s what I’ve done the longest; it’s what stuck.” But Peggy has formally trained under the field’s most respected authorities nationwide including Gary Frost, Bonnie Stahlecker, Barbara Mauriello, Don Glaister, Richard Flavin, Jim Croft and Pamela Spitzmueller.

Currently, Peggy teaches her own series of coursework and offers experience-appropriate workshops ranging from a half-day to nine weeks in length for adults, gifted and talented students, at-risk adolescents and young children alike. Titles of these courses include:

• Making Boxes
• Designer Folds
• Ethiopian Binding with Satchel
• Vademecum
• Flexible Sculptural Books
• Skin-like and Textural Paste Papers
• Japanese Stitching
• 15 Books in a Box
• The Exquisite Corpse
• Clamshell Book with a Box

Handmade Old Book Book

The cover is made from salvaged antique books; the rest is created from new materials. Peggy sews the accordion spine and pages over straps attached to the old cover. She says this book is ideal for photos, journaling or sketching.
Crossed Structure
Finding Closure
36 Shot Album
Piano Hinge—Distortions and Exaggerations

Peggy is obviously not apprehensive about giving intimate and specific details involved in her unique mastery of book artistry. She’s happy to share her knowledge with anyone interested in the craft.

In fact, she recently helped start a group called The Prairie Book Collaborative, a troupe of individuals who, like Peggy, are dedicated to the book in all its forms. The group’s first project is a book titled One. The work is a beautiful compilation of the nine founding members’ own professional samples and bios in their respective fields of printmaking, etching, letterpress and calligraphy. The Prairie Book Collaborative unveiled One at The Edible Book Tea, an event featuring cakes and pastries resembling legendary texts—for example, “S’more and Peace.”

The group’s future ambitions include producing another limited edition book called (you guessed it) Two, as well as creating a library display to educate visitors about all aspects of the book and a Center for the Book in the group’s base of Des Moines, Iowa. The Center, Peggy says, will be a place for those of all ages to work, meet and learn about bookmaking.

The Work

How does Peggy categorize her wildly broad initiatives into a marketable body of work? Pretty methodically, actually. Breaking the offerings in her craft into six distinct areas, it’s rather simple to get a grasp on what seems, at first, to be an insurmountable organization feat. On Peggy’s website, her work is organized as such:

- Books
- Supplies and materials
- Commissioned work
- Gallery and exhibits
- Paper
- Courses

A few examples, taken from Peggy’s website, www.wavelandstudio.com...

The Center, Peggy says, will be a place for those of all ages to work, meet and learn about bookmaking.
The Schedule
It can be tough to pin Peggy down; she’s constantly touring the country for exhibits, shows and courses. Peggy and/or her work have recently been seen as follows:

- Fourth International Book & Paper Arts Triennial
  Chicago—Columbia College
  July 15, 2005–August 27, 2005

- Iowa Exhibited-Heritage Gallery
  Des Moines, Iowa
  June 13, 2005–August 4, 2005

- Intensive Spirit—Celebrating 22 years of the Paper & Book Intensive
  Steamboat Springs, Colorado
  April 29, 2005–June 19, 2005

- Red Dot Fine Art—Small Works
  Santa Fe, New Mexico
  April 1, 2005–April 16, 2005

- Readers Art Five—Susan Hansel Gallery
  Minneapolis, Minnesota
  March 4, 2005–April 26, 2005

The Future
Sitting amongst rose petals scattered across her studio (for the wedding album of a local socialite), Peggy mentions her love of commissioned work—distinctive books that will be revered for generations. So additional people can learn about her specialized craft, she would also like to have more of her work featured in special collections, and Peggy is constantly seeking new forums for gallery, exhibition and even solo shows.

But all of that aside, possibly most rewarding is the opportunity to share her craft with others interested in learning about book sculpture. Peggy hopes to add even more courses to her already broad educational offering and to enlarge her teaching space, providing room for additional students to learn, hands-on, in Peggy’s own studio.

When visiting Peggy Johnston’s studio, show area, storage and printing space—which now spread through three levels of her lovely historic home—it quickly becomes apparent that, for Peggy, the line between professional and personal passion is as blurred as the line between books and artistic sculpture. What a delightful coexistence.

To learn more about Peggy Johnston’s book sculpture, her courses, special commissions and exhibits, simply visit www.wavelandstudio.com.