Letters from Our Readers

MAKING READY ON GRIPPERED CYLINDER PRESSES

Dear Fred: This is in response to Jacob Warner's *Printing on a Vandercook*, etc.

Mr. Warner is right about there not being a magic press although printers, amateur and professional alike, continue to search just as ardently as one seeking the fountain of youth. The only presses that came close to being magic before Letterpress went under, were the large Heidelberg cylinder presses made in various sizes in the 50s. Oddly these state-of-the-art German presses reverted to the drum-cylinder, single revolution principle which went out of style at the turn of the century when the two-revolution press became the leading mechanical principle for cylinder presses.

No platen press has the capacity to print heavy forms. Only a cylinder press can do heavy type forms such as books or halftones or large cuts, Whether it be a hand-cylinder, such as a Vandercook or a massive cylinder press, such as a late Heidelberg or a Miehle.

In response to Jake Warner's difficulty with making-ready on a Vandercook hand-cylinder proof press, I offer these suggestions which have worked for me on such a press.

The cylinder should be underpacked to accommodate a "sandwich" overlay which will be fed to the grippers along with the sheet to be printed.

Cut two sheets of tympan paper slightly larger than the sheet to be printed. Hinge these tympan sheets with a couple of pieces of masking tape at the gripper edge. Place within these two hinged sheets three or four loose pieces of hard bond (24 lb.) up to the grippers and guide.

When the position is O.K. on the sheet to be printed remove one bond sheet from within the sandwich. Place a fresh sheet of the same bond on top of the sandwich, up to the grippers and guide and take an impression. Mark on this impression sheet the gripper and guide edges. This is the make-ready sheet which will be marked up and patched.

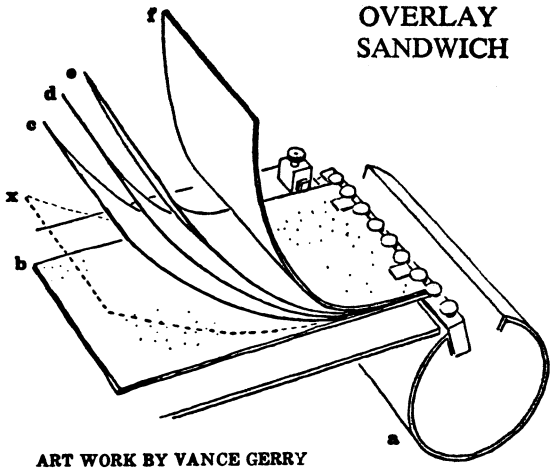
Following the gripper and guide marks, bury this make-ready sheet under the other bond sheets within the sandwich, up to the grippers and guide. Paste the sheet to the gripper edge *only* of the bottom tympan sheet and take another impression on the job paper.

Continue make-ready, removing another bond sheet, if needed, and after making an impression on a fresh sheet of bond, marking it up and patching it, paste the sheet into the sandwich onto the previous make-ready sheet at the gripper edge only.

When make-ready is O.K. (if ever), run sandwich make-ready up to grippers and guide. Lower grippers and tape front edge of sandwich to cylinder. Run the cylinder foreward, smoothing the sandwich make-ready packing to the cylinder and tape the tail end of the sandwich to the top sheet of the cylinder and run the job. On a long run watch the sandwich make-ready packing to see that it doesn't creep or come loose.

The make-ready described above can be altered with the imagination of the printer who's using it. For instance, mylar for a hard top layer to the sandwich, or even thin pressboard will give a hard surface to the top sheet of the sandwich. The important thing is this system is easy to work with as it remains on top of the cylinder packing and the cylinder top sheet does not have to be unreeled to insert the make-ready.

Make-ready is a maddening requirement of printing. I would think readers would welcome anything to help with the insurmountable problem. —**Vance Gerry, Pasadena, California.**



ART WORK BY VANCE GERRY

a *Cylinder underpacked to accommodate sandwich overlay b, c, d, e and f.* **b** *Bottom sheet of sandwich overlay made of tympan paper, plastic or some durable material.* **c, d & e.** *Packing sheets made of hard bond or supercalendared paper. Patched-up makeready sheet will be attached to c sheet.* **f** *Top sheet of sandwich overlay made of flexible durable material: tympan paper, plastic, thin pressboard, etc.* **x** *Phantom sheet, not pasted in, to be removed when makeready sheet is added.*

Steady Demand For Matrices

Marlboro Mats, Inc., a leading supplier of hot type matrices, reports a steady demand for its products. With ±12,000 Lino/Intertype and Ludlow fonts, in stock, it can furnish just about any typeface a typographer might desire.

Since its move from New York to Idaho three years ago, the 60-year-old firm has been kept busy buying and shipping new or carefully used mats to printers throughout the world.

Merle Langley, owner of the enterprise said: "We should have as good a year in '89 as in '88—maybe even better. We pick up about 100 new customers a year, but we also lose a lot too. We have to work harder for our dollar now since many of our new customers are smaller."

He said: "Ludlow sales are taking over a bigger share of the market, these machines are easier to repair and operate, hence their comeback."

Recently Merle went through his entire inventory, inspecting each font. On a card file and in his computer he has listed for each font information such as from whom bought & where stored, if it has long or short descenders, modern or old style figures, pi, accents, logos, typo refinements, type of spacing, color of contrasting, magazines it will run in, etc.

During this inspection over stocked or not perfect common mats were tossed out. No classic faces were discarded. It has been necessary to scrap approximately 59,000 lbs. of matrices in the past three years. Merle explains that a pound of average 10 point mats will contain 60± mats.