



# HISTORIC SANTA FE

The Historic Santa Fe Foundation Monthly Journal **DECEMBER 2018**







## Inside Historic Santa Fe

Our mission is to preserve, protect, and promote the historic properties and diverse cultural heritage of the Santa Fe area, and to educate the public about Santa Fe's history and the importance of preservation.

HSFF publishes one eZine per month with content that provides our audience with a look at what is happening at the Foundation, and beyond in the world of New Mexico and Santa Fe history, archaeology, and the arts, among other topics relevant to our readers. In the upcoming year, HSFF is working with a broad range of high-level volunteers to make El Zaguán: the building, the archives, and the institutional knowledge of staff, Board and volunteers accessible to the community. We are looking at a bright and exciting 2019. We will share updates with you in our eZines, emails and [printed newsletters](#) so please make sure to sign up for our newsletter and join HSFF as a member. We hope you enjoy this issue and we look forward to the future of HSFF and the interactions with our members and our community.

In this issue, we offer a book review by Pete Warzel of Museum of New Mexico Press' *Los Luceros: New Mexico's Morning Star* and an interview with Tom Leech of the Palace of the Governors Printing Press. Please enjoy.

To receive a printed copy of the upcoming Winter 2018/2019 Printed Newsletter that is mailed to members only, please become a HSFF Member. Sign up for MEMBERSHIP online at [historicsantafe.org/join-give](http://historicsantafe.org/join-give) or call us at 505-983-2567 to find out about member rates and benefits. Thanks for your continued support.

Cover images and image above from *Los Luceros: New Mexico's Morning Star*, courtesy Museum of New Mexico Press.

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# BOOK REVIEW

## *Los Luceros: New Mexico's Morning Star*

By Michael Wallis with photography by Gene Peach

Reviewed by Pete Warzel

Los Luceros was always the sign on the road for me, on the way from Taos to Santa Fe, past Alcade and near Ohkay Owingeh, then in time, San Juan Pueblo. Over the years, I began to hear more about it as history, then as architecture, and a Robert Redford scheme. But it always remained invisible to me.

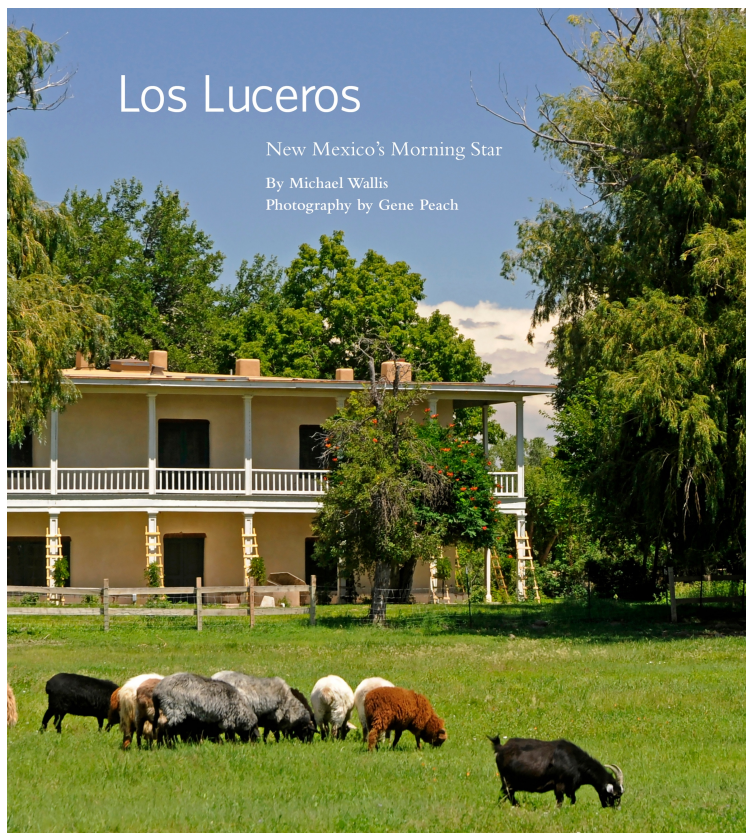
This autumn, 2018, the State of New Mexico, current owner of the historic property through the Department of Cultural Affairs, announced a plan for more public access on a scheduled and continually funded basis, in addition to the annual Harvest Festival held on the grounds. Work is being done on several of the buildings on site for safety reasons. Contemporaneous with the willingness of the state to open this gem for public use, the book *Los Luceros: New Mexico's Morning Star* has been published to the usual standard of quality and elegance by the Museum of New Mexico Press.

The book is filled with historic photographs and contemporary shots by Gene Peach, placing the property in the landscape, portraying it as a gathering place for the various families who have owned it, built it, restored it, and offering interior views of the great forty-two-inch thick walled, two-story, main residence, "Casa Grande". Michael Wallis weaves its history through the stories in these photographs.

Wallis has made a significant effort in

research on this ranch and its buildings. The account is really

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one with Northern New Mexico history, from Spanish settlement to ownership by well-off, well-intended Anglos who were taken not only with the setting on the Rio Grande, but with the Spanish and Pueblo cultures close by. Mary Cabot Wheelwright, owner and restorer of Los Luceros in the early 1920s, is now known for The Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian on Museum Hill, Santa Fe. Wheelwright hired Maria Chabot, after she came to photograph Wheelwright's indigenous art collection, to oversee the ranch in 1934 and ensure its condition for Wheelwright's annual visits. Chabot was intimate with Dorothy Stewart of our El Zaguán, whose sister was Margretta Dietrich. Chabot then worked for Georgia O'Keeffe in overseeing the construction of her Abiquí house after O'Keeffe spent several summers at Ghost Ranch, eventually owned by Carol Stanley, one of the original Anglo owners of Los Luceros, and whose erstwhile, then ex-husband, won the ranch in a poker game.

The who's who is extensive—everyone knew each other and spent time at each other's estates, including Mabel Dodge Luhan who got most of everything started at Los Gallos in Taos and brought D. H. Lawrence to visit Wheelwright at Los Luceros. (The book is sprinkled with interesting facts as in the spelling of Luhan. Married to Tony Lujan of Taos Pueblo, Mabel uses the alternate spelling "Luhan" so her East Coast friends





know how to pronounce the name). Wallis gives detailed background on each of the players, enlivening the narrative of place with that of people.

The connections are astounding from person to person, place to place, and as always, it is the women who were the catalysts and movers of culture and its preservation.

The buildings and main home at Los Luceros have been and continue to be a constant struggle for all owners. Upkeep and maintenance are the keys to the life of this historic ranch, even today, as the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs looks to budget significant funds over the next years to upgrade maintenance and open the property to the public on a more regular basis. The last serious owners before the state of New Mexico were John and Nina Collier. John had been the boy who drove O'Keeffe to the Abiquiu area and her immediate infatuation with Ghost Ranch and its incredible landscape setting. The Colliers were important collectors of Spanish American colonial art who willed their collection to the New Mexico History Museum and the Palace of the Governors. Their work at and on Los Luceros was extensive including the

addition of concrete foundation to the Casa Grande to help keep it intact and upright, and maintained the acequia and orchards, built and planted by the Spanish settlers who originally cultivated this specific piece of land beside the Rio Grande.

Fairly a hidden gem, we hope visitors will now be able, with the revived focus of the Department of Cultural Affairs, to understand the role of this magnificent place in the history of New Mexico – the northern terminus of the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, and the center of artistic endeavor and cultural preservation, connecting Taos to Santa Fe, and its dedicated women.

*Los Luceros: New Mexico's Morning Star*

By Michael Wallis

Photographs by Gene Peach

Museum of New Mexico Press

Hardcover, 184 Pages, \$29.95

All photographs in this article courtesy Museum of New Mexico Press. Contemporary photography by Gene Peach.



# INTERVIEW

## TOM LEECH ON THE PRESS OF THE PALACE OF THE GOVERNORS

We are approaching the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Palace Print Shop and Bindery, also known as the Press of the Palace of the Governors. For those of you who do not know this wonderful place, it is in the great courtyard of the Palace of the Governors, in a separate building adjacent to the New Mexico History Museum proper. Part museum/part working print shop, it is a joy to visit and watch what transpires there. Gustave Baumann's press and materials are there, a sales space with broadsides, pamphlets, books for purchase, the products of the press and bindery. The working area with hand presses, various typefaces neatly in order, and always a project in process whether a major production of Baumann's postcards of Santa Fe printed accordion style in a hand-made slipcase or a wry poster reflecting the Press Director's sense of humor.

That director is Tom Leech. He is also a curator in the History Museum. In conjunction with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, Tom has agreed to bring his series of poetry broadsides and other print projects to an exhibition at HSFF's El Zaguán in April 2019. We will also host a Salon talk during that month where Tom will talk about the Press and some of the poets whose work he has printed with will read their words.

Tom is a master printer, paper maker and artist, writer, and curator of major exhibitions at the Museum. He joined the Museum in 2001 and was the recipient of the Mayor's Award for Excellence in the Arts in 2013. To kick things off for 2019, we spend time with Tom Leech about the Print Shop, his involvement, and what it all means to the continuing history of Santa Fe. In an article published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in March of 2018, Tom is quoted regarding the excellent condition of the presses and equipment at the Print Shop: "It's preservation through production." That may be a lesson for all of us concerned with the preservation of our cultural and architectural history in Santa Fe.

*HSFF: We should begin by saying that The Palace Press will celebrate 50 years of operation in 2019, and that we, you and HSFF, have scheduled an exhibition at HSFF'S El Zaguán in April 2019 of your work on poetry broadsides, for National Poetry Month. That said, how do you decide on printing projects for the Shop?*

**TL:** Perhaps I should start with how and why it came to be that poetry would be such a staple of the Press's output. Shortly after I started here in late 2001, Lynn Cline interviewed me for Pasatiempo as the new printer (or the new Pam Smith) at the Palace of the Governors. In the story, I mentioned that one thing I hoped to do The Historic Santa Fe Foundation

would be printing poetry broadsides. My interest in that came directly through my friend and mentor, Jim Trissel, at the Press at Colorado College. I had collaborated with Jim on many poetry broadsides as a papermaker. I honestly did not have a great feel for poetry at the time, so my saying so was a challenge to myself to enter into an exploration of the genre.

In response to Lynn's article, poet Gary Mex Glazner came in to the Press with an idea for a portfolio of poems by noted poets. I asked him to write up a proposal, and he returned a couple of weeks later with some very good



ideas. So, this gets to your question about how I decide on printing projects.

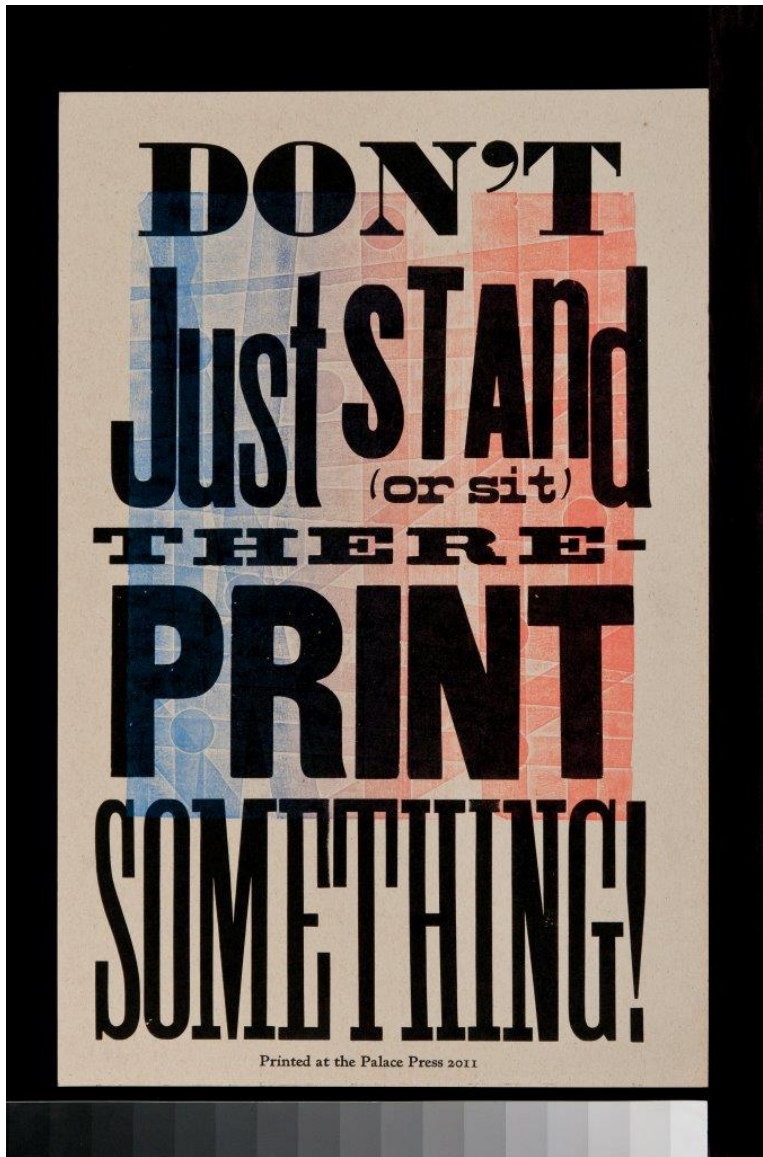
There are some criteria that I consider, but the first is that I have to like it! It's no fun slogging through a job that you've lost interest in or that you can't stand behind. That said, the design of a broadside is not just about putting words on paper; there are other visual factors to consider.

In the case of that first portfolio, Gary acted as editor and chose the poets and five or six of their poems. I then selected the poem based on what I could do with it typographically. One other point worth mentioning is that a broadside is meant to be seen – perhaps day after day on your wall. I feel the poem has to make sense when you get to the end of it. And even though I might not understand all the meaning that can be rolled up in a poem, I feel the reader should be rewarded for investing the time to read it.

**HSFF:** *Tell us a bit about the structure of the Print Shop within the Museum system, and its Mission.*

**TL:** We are very much a part of what draws people to the History Museum, or any museum for that matter. We interact with all departments of the museum, and at times with the other museums and historic sites in the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) system. On the one hand, we offer support to other departments all the time, but on the other we have a great deal of autonomy. Keeping in mind that we are public servants, we try our best to interact with the public by answering direct

questions, and also to engage visitors who would not otherwise have an interest in printing. The Palace Press is a working exhibit - a term I prefer over "living history." I'm very gratified by the thought that people would spend their time and money coming in to learn or have an experience out of their everyday lives. It's good to keep that in mind.



If I were to try to phrase a mission statement, it would be that the Palace Press is here to preserve and promote the literary history of New Mexico. But I would also tack on that the more I come to study history, the more I realize that printing is so very fundamental to what we think of as history. Books, magazines, newspapers – and even manuscript material – are all related to print and literacy in one way or another. They become the sources for historians to interpret history.

**HSFF:** *What is the range of things you print?*

**TL:** What we print ranges from the ridiculous to the sublime. We always have a variety of greeting cards available – some serious and some tongue in cheek. Poetry broadsides, chapbooks and limited edition books are available (when they aren't sold out)

or in various stages of planning or production.

**HSFF:** *You collaborate with the New Mexico Museum Press on special editions of their trade publications. Please give us an inside look on how that works.*

**TL:** I would call that relationship a co-operation rather than a collaboration. The number of books we can print in an edition is necessarily limited. But that's not to say that the readership should be limited, and some of our books really do call for a wider readership. Not everyone



can or wants to spend two or three hundred dollars (or more) on a book. So, when I have a manuscript that I feel should have a larger audience I contact Anna Gallegos at the MNM Press to see if there is interest in adding it to their list. We've done that with two of our books – *Jack Thorp's Songs of the Cowboys* by Mark Gardner and *O'Keefe Stories* by Margaret Wood (both of which won a Hertzog Award for Excellence in Book Design). So really, we don't do "special editions" of their books – they do trade editions of our books.

**HSFF:** *How was the Print Shop founded 50 years ago? Who was instrumental in doing so and what was the vision then?*

**TL:** I would have to do more digging through our records to give an exact chronology and to account for all the players, but here's the simple version. In 1968 or '69, the family that owned the newspaper in Estancia, NM, offered the contents of their defunct print shop to the museum. Someone must have said, "Sounds like a good idea," not really knowing what that would entail. But the press did arrive here about then, and the museum had to figure to what to do with all the equipment. Peter Wells was a curator here and he was instrumental in getting the Press up and running, but the Palace Press really came into its own with Pam Smith. I believe she started as a volunteer, but soon proved her worth and dedication and was hired on full time to run the Press. The 28 years she spent here established the credibility of the Palace Press as contributor to the cultural life of New Mexico. Pam insisted on not only the quality of the printing but also

the quality and relevance of the content. She also did a huge amount of research and documentation of the state's printing history.

**HSFF:** *Has your stewardship of the Print Shop changed any of the direction?*

**TL:** I would like to think that my stewardship of the Palace Press continues what Pam began – that being a press dedicated to quality production, public education, and enhanced visitor experience. When you think of it, there aren't many museums where visitors can walk in and engage a curator in conversation. So many people think curators live in ivory towers, but we're the opposite of that; we get our hands dirty! Under Pam Smith the Press became a de facto center for book arts, and I've tried to build on that by bringing exhibits, speakers and programs that foster interest in all book-related crafts.

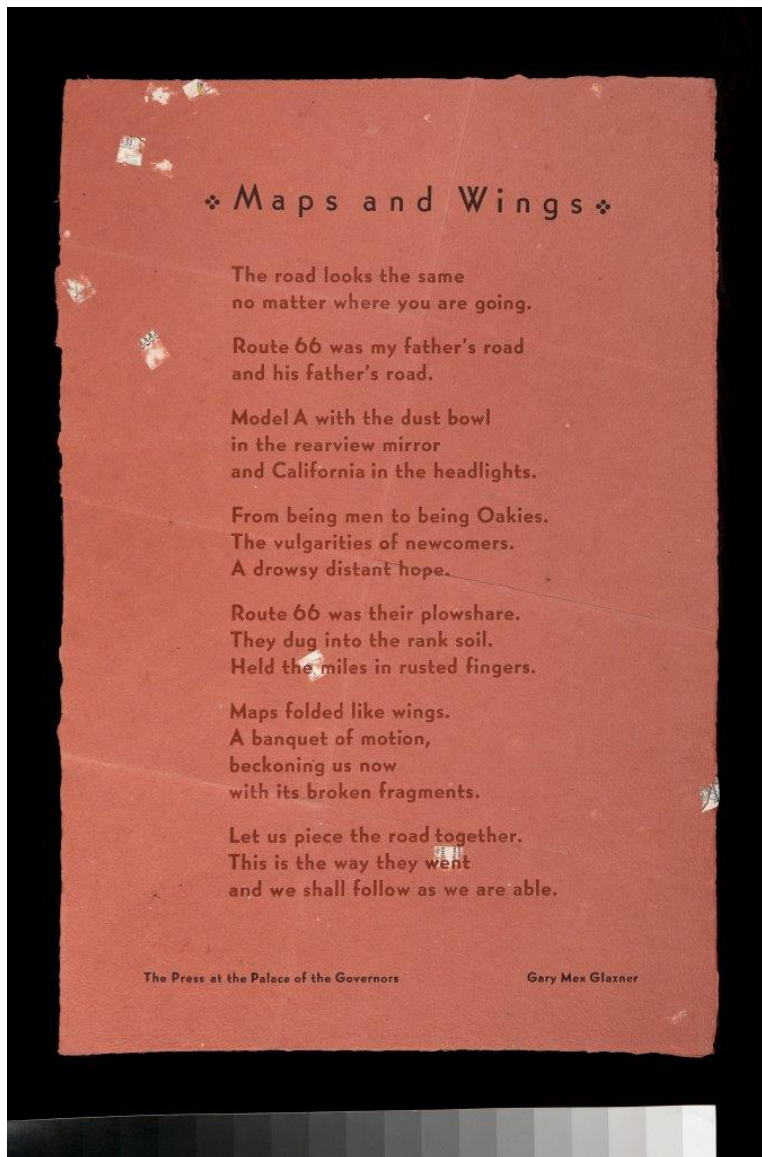
**HSFF:** *Are there special events planned in 2019 for the anniversary?*

**TL:** We had hoped to mount a 50-year retrospective of the Palace Press, but unfortunately, gallery space, which is at a real premium in our museum, won't be

available. It would be great to have a celebration, but no plans have been made. Stay tuned!

**HSFF:** *I believe that every year you invite the public to print a special Christmas card on a press. This maybe a hidden gem in Santa Fe. Tell us a bit about that.*

**TL:** A visit to the Palace Press has been part of our annual Christmas at the Palace long before I arrived. We just had another successful evening, where hundreds of folks came through and printed a holiday keepsake of our 111-year old press from Estancia. I actually missed it this year because I was away on sick leave, but James Bourland,





who is such a valuable asset to the Press, managed the evening and a record number of visitors. People have told me that they come every year and keep a collection of our cards. We also have a tradition of offering printer's hats folded from newspapers. It's great to see people on the Plaza those evenings wearing the hats – it's a wonderful fashion statement.

**HSFF:** *A Gathering for Gus – a Baumann Symposium for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gustave Baumann's locating to Santa Fe was just held under your guidance. This city was abuzz with everything Baumann. Did you learn anything new about him that surprised during the event?*

**TL:** I'm still abuzz with the success of the event. I knew we were onto something when, on the day we sent out our first announcement for the symposium, I had a call from Rome reserving tickets! I really can't tell you any one thing that I learned because I'm still processing it all. The positive response of the attendees was so hugely gratifying, as was all the support we got to make it happen. When the New Mexico Museum of Art mounted their year-long celebration of their first 100 years it dawned on me that Baumann arrived here right at the end of the museum's inaugural year. In my research into Baumann and his processes I have come to realize not only what a unique artist he was, but also to appreciate the ways he participated in and affected civic life here. I now think of him as a historic figure who made art as much as "just another Santa Fe artist."

**HSFF:** *Tell us about yourself and how you came to the Palace.*

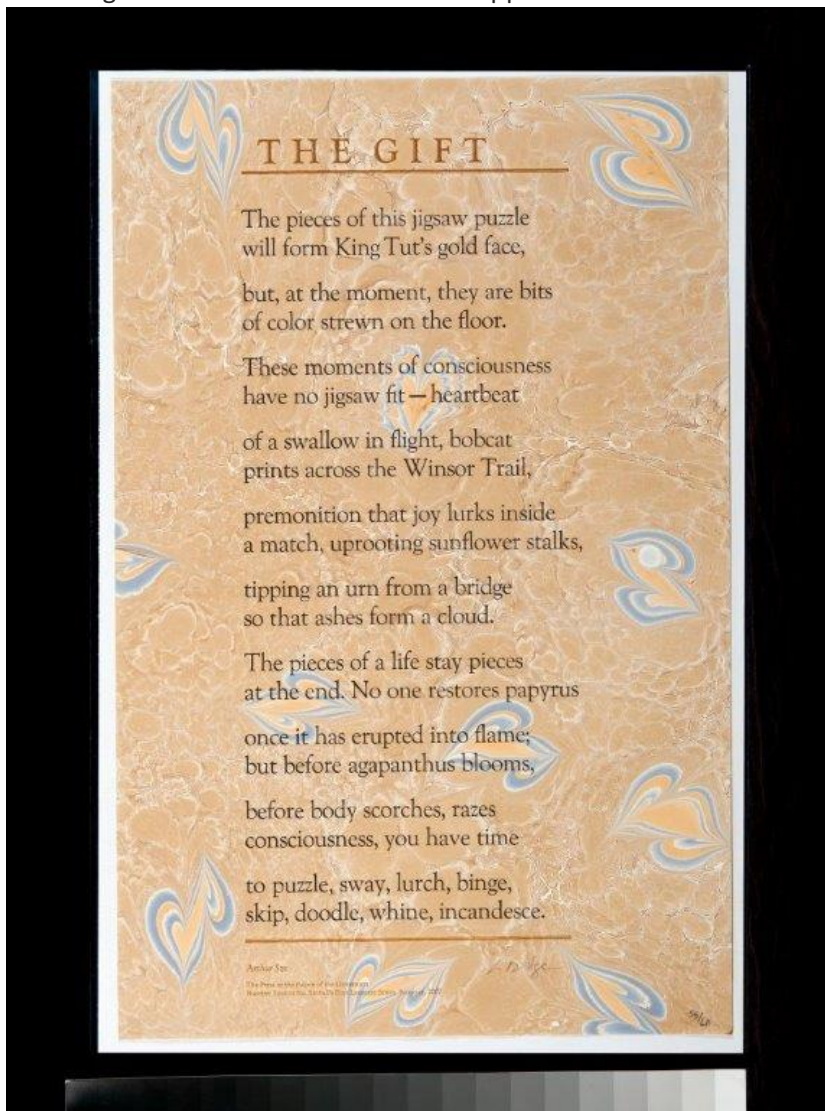
**TL:** Can I skip this one? In a nutshell, I was born in Allentown, PA, grew up in Grand Rapids Michigan, graduated from Aquinas College there with a BFA in painting and sculpture, did a year of graduate school at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, dropped out and moved to Colorado Springs, built

dulcimers in Cripple Creek, Colorado, but went broke doing that so began working for a greeting card company. During that time, I purchased my first letterpress and started making paper as an avocation, but after 16 years opened and ran my own printshop for 10 years, which is what I was doing when the job here in Santa Fe opened up. During those ten "self-unemployed" years I also was a member of the Everest Environmental Project and co-founded Paper Road/Tibet, which worked to research and revive traditional Tibetan papermaking. I have three sons and five grandsons, and am ridiculously

happily married to Kathleen Koltes, a ceramic artist. I draw, paint, and make and marbled paper when I can.

**HSFF:** *The floor is open – feel free to address anything you would like.*

**TL:** Although no date has been set, when my time here at the museum comes to an end, I look forward to the Palace Press' next incarnation. There is a lot of life left in our old presses and much more good work to be done with them. Whoever takes this on next will no doubt bring a lot of new skills and interests to the position. And I'm sure they will feel as I do – that he or she has won the job lottery.





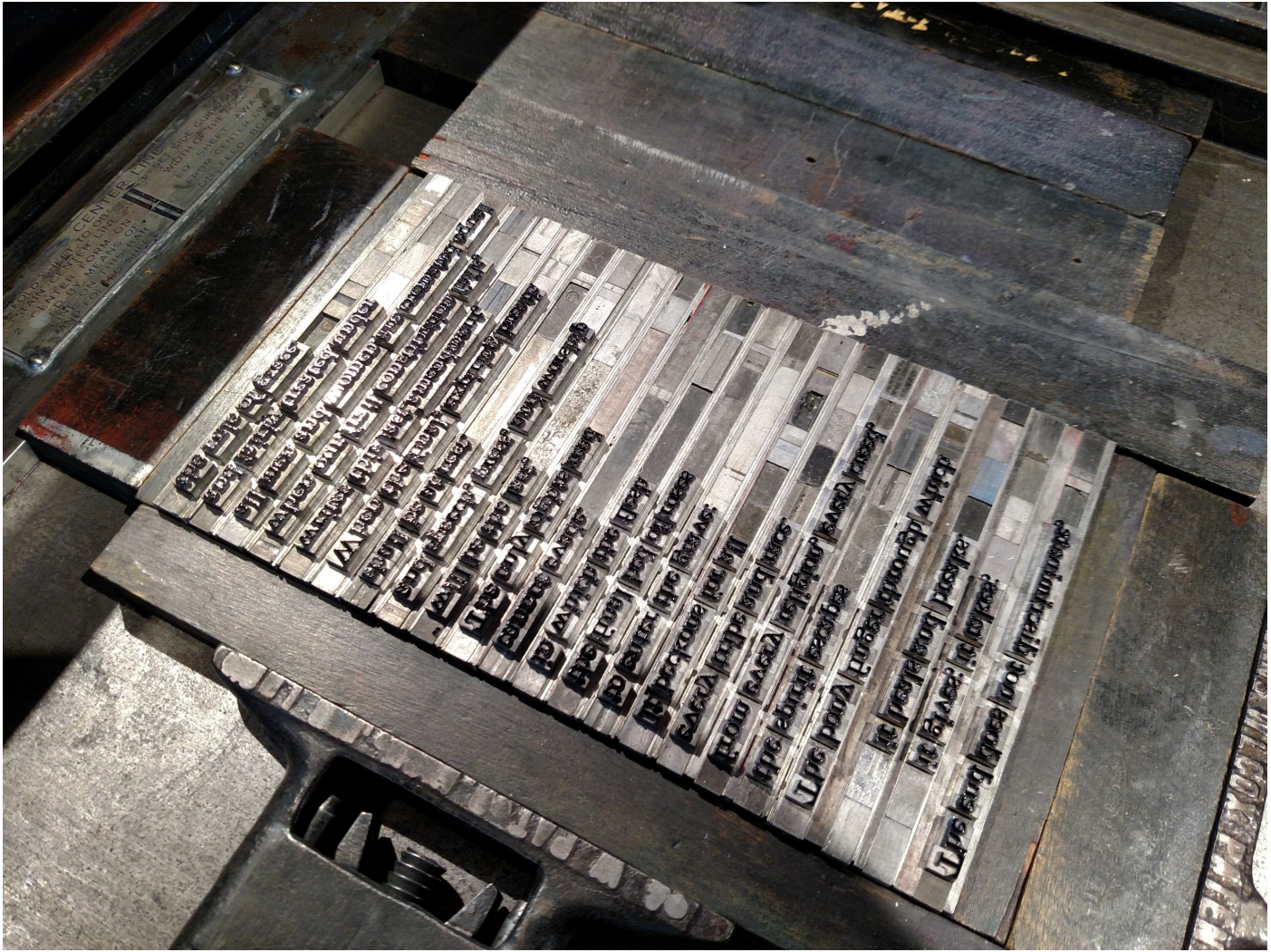


Plate at Palace of the Governors Print Shop, Pete Warzel

## HSFF MISSION

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