Certified Library Binder Members Embrace Recertification!

An important process initiated by the Library Binding Institute (LBI) has come to fruition. As of December 20, 2012, twelve certified members of the Library Binding Institute successfully completed the recertification process. These include:

ACME-HF Group  
Bound to Stay Bound  
Bridgeport National Bindery  
Campbell-Logan Bindery  
Houchen Bindery  
Lehmann Bookbinding  
National Library Bindery Company of Georgia  
National Library Bindery Company of Indiana  
United States Government Printing Office  
University of California Library Bindery  
Wallaceburg Bookbinding  
Wert Bookbinding

Other certified members are completing the steps necessary to become recertified, which includes submitting samples for inspection by technical director Werner Rebsamen, providing library binding client references, demonstrating proof of insurance on client materials, and verifying adherence to the ANSI/NISO/LBI Library Binding Standard, Z39.78-2000. These steps are outlined in the Certification, Recertification, and Examination Procedures document, which was discussed and voted on by certified library binder members during LBI’s Spring Meeting in Quebec City, Quebec, held May 14-16, 2011.

The purpose of certification, as stated in the document, “signifies that a Commercial Library

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Binder or Institutional Binder is competent and retains competency to produce work in accordance with the presiding ANSI/NISO/LBI Standard for Library Binding and has otherwise produced evidence of responsibility and capability in the conduct of its business.”

According to LBI Vice President Duncan Campbell of Campbell-Logan Bindery, “There was some discussion as to what re-certification might actually mean” and how this process would work. He also mentioned that “the proposed process will primarily focus on the examination of books and periodicals for compliance to the technical specifications of the LBI standard” and that it is “intended to ensure that certified members maintain the capability to produce volumes that meet the LBI standard.”

“We don’t do binding; we are an end user,” said Laura Cameron, Head of Binding & Finishing at Stanford University. “We want to be certain that what does come to our libraries will last—not just for physical use but if they are digitized. We retain materials even if they are digitized.”

In 2011, a conference call was held and all certified binder members were invited to participate. More than ten days prior to the annual membership meeting in Quebec, the final document was circulated to all certified library members to review in preparation for the meeting.

The recertification process began in September 2011 with five certified company members identified by a random draw of names. A request for samples was submitted along with a list of up to six clients with whom the binder does business. Each applicant had to submit the following samples:

1. Recased text block—publisher’s binding, Smyth Sewn.
2. One partially bound book—sewn through the fold text block, 6 periodical issues (e.g., Time) or book signatures.
3. One Double-fan adhesive bound text block—6 periodical issues (e.g., National Geographic) or book signatures.
4. One Oversewn text block—6 periodical issues (e.g., JAMA) or book signatures.
5. One sample of each of the materials used in Samples 1-4.
Samples A through D had be examples of the regular library binding work of the applicant and must be produced entirely in the applicant’s own bindery.

LBI Technical Director, Werner Rebsamen, reviewed the samples and the company name was anonymous. Once the samples were approved, the company received a letter verifying recertification and the timeframe for which it is valid. Recertification will be valid for a seven-year period.

As one recertified member wrote, “This was an instructive exercise and important step in order to demonstrate the viability and credibility of the ANSI/NISO/LBI Library Binding Standard, Z39.78-2000.”

Throughout the process, legal counsel was retained to review the procedures and proposed updates, as well as the association’s bylaws, to ensure legal compliance and that best practices were followed.

**What is Certification?**

Certification is the manner in which the Library Binding Institute (dba Hardcover Binders International), in accordance with a recognized and specialized reoccurring procedure, signifies that a Commercial Library Binder or Institutional...
Binder is competent and retains competency to produce work in accordance with the presiding ANSI/NISO/LBI Standard for Library Binding and has otherwise produced evidence of responsibility and capability in the conduct of its business.

Any Commercial Library Binder or Institutional Binder is eligible for certification, regardless of size, location, or methods of production. A Commercial Library Binder shall be any individual proprietor, partnership, firm or corporation engaged in the business of library binding. An Institutional Binder shall be an institution with a bindery capable of doing work according to the presiding ANSI/NISO/LBI Standard for Library Binding and does a substantial part of the institution’s binding requirements for their own use, as distinguished from those institutions which use outside commercial library binders. Each separate company shall be eligible for membership. The Library Binding Institute agrees that certified membership shall always be open to any Commercial Library Binder or Institutional Binder provided that it is able to meet the following requirements:

A. It has applied to the Library Binding Institute for Certified membership.

B. It is a Commercial Library Bindery or Institutional Bindery, with a plant equipped to do library binding meeting the presiding ANSI/NISO/LBI Standard for Library Binding, and has been an operating binding business during the one year prior to application for membership.

C. It has proved to the satisfaction of the approved inspector that it is capable to produce binding in accordance with the presiding ANSI/NISO/LBI Standard for Library Binding on a continuing production basis.

D. It has adequate insurance coverage (as defined by the Board of Directors) on the property of its customers entrusted to it, accepts liability for nonperformance of contracts and for damage for uninsurable causes, and has furnished the Executive Director with a Certificate of such insurance from an insurance company.

E. It has furnished satisfactory references for all its library binding clients, up to a maximum of six.

According to Jeanne Drewes, Chief, Binding & Collections Care Division, Mass Deacidification, Library of Congress, “The Library of Congress has for many years contracted for binding services and has used the LBI specifications as part of the requirements for such contracts. Having the certification process for library binders makes those specifications even more meaningful because we know that through the certification process all certified binders can follow the required specifications. This is a boon for government contracting.”

Hardcover Binders International
Library Binding Institute
What do they mean when they use the terminology “Quarter or Half-bound?” This was a question a librarian had for the LBI office. We get many such questions. As I am responsible for answering all technical inquiries related to bookbinding, it is always a pleasure to be challenged to give satisfactory answers. For a teacher and presenter, good questions are always encouraging. Best of all, these inquiries and questions often provide topic ideas for an in-depth article. So let us discuss and cover this particular subject.

If we look at a bookshelf filled with hardcover bound books, all we see are the spines. Yes, those spines come in many different dimensions, in virtually every color, and made from a variety of materials. My genuine leather bound, almost 5-inch thick “Unabridged World Dictionary” (these days, a nostalgic item) seems to dominate the space on my office bookshelf. Other books, displayed in our living room, are bound into exotic leathers. Some feature raised bands. When only the spines are visible on a bookshelf, we have no idea if they are all entirely covered either with cloth or leather or any other variety of binding materials. After all, we are not able to see the panels, which make-up the book covers. Publishers are fully aware of this, and if you analyze today’s edition bindings, the majority of the hardcover bindings seem to have a cloth spine and the panels are covered with an inexpensive, colored paper. There are also many other versions, and that is what this article is all about.

Full-bound Case
First, when and if we use the term “case,” that description is much different from many other hand bookbinding techniques, where the cords used to sew the book blocks are laced through or are glued to the board panels. A case is a separately manufactured item that is later joined with the book block in an operation called casing-in. These are the techniques used in library, edition and photo bookbinding. A full bound case means that a single material was used to fabricate the cover. Here are some of the material options to cover the boards:

- Inexpensive, printed or just colored kraft papers. (Type I)
- Non-woven paper substrates, reinforced with resinous materials are called Type II. These covering materials qualify for binding school textbooks. Both the inexpensive and the reinforced paper substrates can be UV coated or laminated with different qualities of films.
- The next step up would be cloth, with the least expensive fabric considered Grade A, and the best and most expensive ones, used for library bindings, Grade F. Newer coating techniques allow various grades of cloth to be offset or digital printed.
- There are now a variety of newer, extruded, synthetic covering materials, which offer exceptional strength and rub resistance. These are called P/U (Poly Urethane) covering materials. Latex saturated paper substrates may also be coated with P/U.
- Bonded and genuine leathers are considered “top-of-the-line.”
As you can see, with such a great selection, a book designer’s task of selecting an appropriate binding material to make a case is not an easy undertaking. If you, as a reader of *ShelfLife* wishes to get an idea of the large variety of covering materials that are available, then just open up some of the suppliers’ web pages. HBI/LBI represents all the major covering material manufacturers and suppliers. Their web sites are listed in our directory.

**Quarter-bound or Three-piece Covers**

Now to introduce a little confusion. For this writer and teacher, particularly since English is my secondary language, choosing the right terminology can sometimes be a challenging task. Basically, the term “Quarter-bound” is a bibliophile expression. So is a “Half-bound” binding. The latter features big corners, an application used in hand bookbinding only. Today’s publishing industry changed the term “Quarter-bound” to “Three-piece Covers.” In other words, they only count the covering materials being used. Even that terminology may be challenged, since in order to be correct, they should also include the boards and the inlay—six pieces total.

Why would we even consider producing three-piece covers? It requires more labor-intensive tasks to assemble and glue down three pieces of covering materials. At a recent plant visit to one of the nation’s top book manufacturing facilities, we observed the painful process of casemaking three-piece covers on an older Kolbus DA 36 casemaking machine. It required two passes. In the first phase, they used a strip of cloth and glued together the boards and inlay. During the second phase, they glued down and turned-in the panels. I used to operate such a double-header casemaking machine and know too well that it requires a considerable amount of set-up time. That’s okay for long runs, but as most of us are in the short-run business these days, the ROI on such endeavors becomes very...
questionable. But our clients, the publishers, are not concerned with the cost of our set-up times and how we manufacture three-piece covers. They only see the savings of using cloth on the spine and inexpensive colored kraft papers on the panels. A book designer may desire better and more expensive materials, but these days, due to severe competition down to a fraction of a penny, they may be forced to accept more economical solutions.

You may be wondering how much of the spine material should show on the boards? This depends on the designer’s preference for more or less. A general rule is 1/6 of the width. In other words, if you have a hardcover binding with a trim-size of 6 x 9 inches, the cloth showing on the panels should be one inch.

Three-piece Cover Case-making

After immigrating to the U.S. in 1960, I was, and continue to be amazed by the advanced ingenuity being used in making cases and binding hardcover bound books. Dexter and Sheridan casemaking machines dominated those tasks as they offered in-line or stream casemaking manufacturing concepts. You could feed pre-cut single pieces or opt for roll-fed options. Some of these casemaking machines featured in-line board slitting. A thin square-back book requires a case that needs a board strip as an inlay. Those small strips are difficult to feed. A single sheet of board then is slit into three pieces and spaced apart...
in a controlled manner for the required joint areas. This is all in-line, at high speeds. Most covering materials, like cloth or coated papers, come from the mills in rolls. They require slitting and cutting, a task for which industry suppliers offer special machinery. For book manufacturers, this is another labor-intensive task and that is why some of our suppliers have made a business of selling pre-cut pieces of cloth and other covering materials. Those old Dexter and Sheridan casemaking machines were capable of producing book covers using a roll-fed device for single piece, two and three-piece covers. Roll(s), slit to the required width, then received a coat of a sticky protein adhesive. The boards and inlay were added, the corners are cut (on some machines before glue application), and the sides are turned-in. After tucking-in the corners, the continuous web uses a rotary cut-off device and then turns-in the top and bottom of a bookcase. A skilled bookbinder can easily recognize how such a cover was manufactured. The corner turn-ins are reversed from the common practice to turn-in top and bottom first and then the sides. On those casemaking machines, three-piece covers are made in one pass, at the same speed as a single piece cover. Some of those casemaking machines operated with amazing speed. A newer version of a roll-fed casemaker, built by the Crathern Engineering Company in New Hampshire, is capable of producing up to 120 covers a minute! I saw it with my own eyes during a past drupa. My students at RIT were shown a video of such amazing ingenuity. The engineer who demonstrated this sophisticated, high-speed casemaking machine during a long past drupa was Ted Greene, now with GP2 Technology. Ted and his team are now engineering and building zero-make-ready casemaking machines for today’s markets – that is for POD and one book at a time.

Today, casemaking machines have evolved into sophisticated, yet easy to operate systems. Long gone are the Dexters and Sheridans, yet some of these old machines are still used in the day-to-day operations at major book manu-

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facturing establishments, making bookcases for our bestsellers. That is especially true for three-piece covers. Most edition bookbinding casemaking machinery is now coming from Germany. Companies like Kolbus and Hoerauf have developed high-speed casemaking systems capable of coping with many different tasks. They are fully aware that the skilled people of the past are gone. Today’s young people grow-up with computers and expect to use touch screens at work for all of their make-readies and change-overs, tasks which can be accomplished in remarkably less time. The linear casemaking systems of the past have been incorporated into the newer machinery designs. It was once necessary for a skilled craftsperson to control

In a bookshelf, we see only the spines. This publisher combined genuine leather with cloth. Photo from the author’s files - a Franklin Mint brochure.
the viscosity of the adhesive, adding water when needed. Today, the temperature and viscosity are also fully controlled by computers. But by now, you may be curious about how do we make three-piece covers in an efficient way for very short-run hardcover bindings?

Pre-assembled and Do-it-yourself Three-piece Covers

Most of our bestsellers are still hardcover bound books and are produced sometimes by the hundred of thousands. While most are offered with three-piece covers, times have changed. We now must be able to economically process the so-called “non-traditional” titles in very low quantities. The 3 million new titles registered at the Library of Congress every year offer great opportunities for those of us in the printing and binding business. The challenge becomes coping with such short-run requests for three-piece covers, times have changed and we simply can no longer afford extensive change-over times on older casemaking equipment and running the covers through twice. During the 2012 HBI/LBI fall conference in Ann Arbor, LBS displayed their new, pre-assembled three-piece covers in a variety of styles and colors, including those that combined cloth spines with colored, kraft paper panels. Although this is a new item, we were told that it is already proving a welcome addition for our industry, and sales are strong. Maybe there are other suppliers offering similar items but at this time, this writer is only aware of those from LBS.

During a recent hardcover binding consulting assignment for a commercial printer in Texas, the following question was posed: “How can we produce extremely small orders when our clients ask for three-piece covers?” For decades, this expert printer offered its customers only soft-cover, perfect bound bindings. They recognized the on-going trends and new markets and acquired short-run hardcover binding equipment. They now needed the necessary know-how of binding hardcover books. While teaching them Hardcover Binding 101, I also showed them how easy it is to assemble all three-cover pieces into a single unit. This task is accomplished by tipping the pieces together. The covers don’t necessarily have to be three pieces—a two-piece cover may consist of a printed and laminated front panel, the remaining case could be any other covering material with hot-stamping on the spine. Of course, it is important to be careful with the grain directions when tipping pieces together. The grain should always run along the tipping
Three-piece Book Covers

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5. With a brush, apply the adhesive mixture. Pick-up the entire package and with a slight additional fanning motion, separate the glue lines between the individual sheets.

6. Now start your assembly project. Pick up one sheet at a time and using the top and side strips as guides, place them into position, right onto the centered spine strip.

For an operation done by hand, it does go relatively fast. The fact that you are able to charge your clients an extra dollar for such “creative” three-piece covers is worth all the effort. Bear in mind, those new casemaking devices and short-run, zero-make ready casemaking machines being offered these days do not waste a single cover!

My client in Texas recently sent me a “thank you” e-mail for this kind of professional advice. This gesture then created another incentive to share such know-how with others. In the short-run business, printing books for families and other clients, we often do not have dust jackets. A three-piece cover or any other alternative to a single piece cover can give a hardcover bound product that personal touch. It’s been a success for this printer in Texas and it can be yours as well.
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Company: ________________________________
Mailing Address: ________________________________
City: __________________ State: ______ Zip: __________ Country: __________
Phone: __________________ Fax: __________________
Website: __________________
Contact Person: __________________
Contact E-mail: __________________

Membership Category – Select One

[ ] ACTIVE MEMBER
An Active Member shall be any individual, company or organization residing within or outside of the United States whose interest lies in the hardcover binding of books. This includes those engaged in various types of book manufacturing including soft cover binding, edition binding, trade binding, photo books, yearbooks, print on demand, and ultra short runs. This also includes publishers.
Dues: $350 for every $250,000 in total book binding* revenue; $995 min/$3,500 maximum
* Revenue should be included for all book market related services including pre-press, digital archiving, printing, binding, fulfillment and distribution, etc.

[ ] ACTIVE INTERNATIONAL MEMBER
An Active International Member shall be any individual, company or organization located outside Continental North America whose interest lies in the hard cover and/or soft cover binding of books. This includes those engaged in various types of book manufacturing including edition binding, trade binding, photo books, yearbooks, print on demand, and ultra short runs. This also includes publishers.
Dues: $395

[ ] ASSOCIATE MEMBER
An Industry Partner (Supplier) shall be any company which supplies a product or service related to the production of hardcover bound books. A member in this category is automatically a member of both the hardcover binder and certified library binder divisions.
Dues: $500

[ ] NONPROFIT MEMBER
A non-production Nonprofit Member shall be any 501(c)(6) or 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is related to the hardcover binding of books.
Dues: $500

* Dues Amount Owed – Please indicate here. $
I attest to the accuracy of the information provided including calculation of dues.
Signature: ________________________________ Date: ______________
Print Name: ____________________________

Payment Method – Select One
[ ] Check- Please make checks payable to Hardcover Binders International.
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Card Number: ________________________________
Name on Card: ____________________________ Exp. Date: __________
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MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Subscription to ShelfLife, HBI/LBI’s quarterly publication
- Subscription to Endpaper, HBI/LBI’s monthly e-mail newsletter
- Member discounts on conferences, seminars, and publications
- A company listing on the HBI/LBI website and in the membership directory
- Access to members only information on the website which includes back issues of ShelfLife, Endpaper, and Werner Rebsamen articles
- A membership certificate reflecting your membership in good standing

For more information, contact Debra Nolan, CAE, at 561-745-6821.
dnolan@hardcoverbinders.org.

* Dues are deductible as a necessary business expense but not as a charitable deduction.