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### on the cover

*Charles Brandt at the microscope removing pigment from Audubon's 'Birds of America'*

## High Tech Hermit Priest

by Larry Peterson

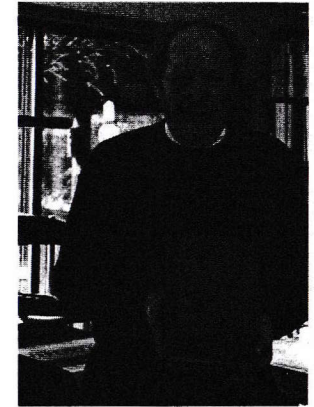
Father Charles Brandt, book-binder, paper restorer and hermit priest, takes us upstairs in his hermitage and boots up his 2002 iMac flat screen computer in readiness to e-mail a freshly-taken digital photograph to Toronto.

Charles was born in Kansas City, Missouri, February 19, 1923 and raised on a small farm on the city outskirts. His passion for fishing and the outdoors was nurtured on and around the nearby Osage River. As an Eagle Scout, he passed a merit badge for book-binding and another passion was born. In high school he sang tenor, lettered in tennis and because of academic performance and debating skills won a scholarship in oration to William Jewel College in Liberty, Missouri.

After a short time studying Wildlife Conservation at the University of Missouri, WW II intervened and Charles was drafted in 1941. He won his navigator wings and practiced as a radar

navigator on B-29s. Before he could be ordered overseas in the Japanese campaign, the war ended, and he was able to enroll at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y. in the fall of 1945 to study ornithology. He earned his B.Sc. from Cornell, but then his career took another turn. He entered Episcopal Seminary Nashotah House in Wisconsin and earned his Bachelor of Divinity, becoming ordained as a deacon in Colorado. He then travelled to England to research and practice the contemplative life and returned to the U.S. and lived as an Anglican hermit in Connecticut.

The next ten years or so, Charles spent in Michigan, Oklahoma and Dubuque, Iowa. Two life-shaping events happened during this time. First, he converted to Roman Catholicism and set out to model his life after the writings of Cardinal John Henry Newman, especially *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, and began researching the roots of the monastic life. Second, he spent eight years in charge of all book-binding at the Abbey in Dubuque.



Following up on his studies of the monastic life, he moved, as part of an international group of eight hermits, to the banks of the Tsolum River near Courtenay on Vancouver Island, British Columbia in March of 1965. He was ordained to the priesthood November 21, 1966 in Courtenay. With the necessity of supporting himself, he worked as a Department of Fisheries and Oceans technician on the Tsolum and began bookbinding and paper conservation as a profession.

In 1969, he bought twenty-eight acres overlooking the Oyster River twenty kilometers north of Courtenay, but chose to travel for a time to follow the professional side of his life. From 1973 to 1980, he spent time in the England Document Center, on the European continent, in Moncton, N.B., and in Ottawa. In 1980, he became chief conservator of the Archives in Winnipeg and produced two of his lifetime achievements in restoration. He restored the Nuremberg Chronicle of 1495



including lithographs and engravings (see CBBAG 1995). And, he restored Volume I of Audubon's Ornithology which included over one hundred hand coloured lithographs (see The Beaver Summer 1983).\*

Charles decided in 1984 to return to his Oyster River hermitage and expand it to a state of the art facility for bookbinding, document restoration, and restoration of fine art on paper.

From 1984 to the present, Charles has practiced his religious life at his hermitage, assisted and led environmental projects and done contract work on bookbinding and paper restoration. In addition to

Cardinal Newman, Charles' other great hero is renowned naturalist Aldo Leopold. It seems only fitting then that Charles' current passion is focussing his video camera and computer on the natural world in an attempt to capture and share his feelings of wonder and awe.

*Larry Peterson has his B.Ed.(Sec.) in English and Phys-Ed from UBC and is recently retired from teaching. He is currently pursuing conservation and restoration of salmon streams.*

[\* See page 6 for the reprinted article on the restoration of the Audubon's Ornithology with new photos. eD.]



*The new CBBAG bindery*

### **CBBAG Newsletter Back Issues!**

Available from the Editor at a cost of \$5.00 per copy.  
Volume 13 No.1 Spring 1995 features the article on  
The Nuremberg Chronicle of 1495 by Charles Brandt.  
Address all correspondence to the 'Newsletter Group'.

### **CBBAG HAS MOVED**

CBBAG is pleased to inform our membership that we have obtained new space at an Artscape building at 60 Atlantic Ave., Suite 112, Toronto, ON M6K 1X9.

Phone, fax, e-mail address and website remain the same:

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Bulletin Board on the Web:

<http://www.web.net/~cbbag/BulletinBoard.html>

We have been able to acquire 25% more room at the same rent, which was a major consideration in making the decision. The space is a better shape for our purposes so that we have more floor space, important when you are teaching workshops to a large group. It is in a lively, downtown area with restaurants nearby and public transportation easily accessible. Wish us good luck with our new space!