

# The Lowdown on Pasteup

*Stories from HP's Early Days*

**Kathleen Jarschke-Schultze**

©2004 Kathleen Jarschke-Schultze

As *Home Power* hits its 100th issue, I've been thinking about the early days of the magazine. It was between *HP16* and *HP17* that Bob-O and I moved to the creek, our present home near Hornbrook, California. Since we had the biggest house of everyone involved with the magazine, pasteup was held in our front room every two months. It was always a whole day's worth of work, and afterwards, dinner and relaxation.

## *In the Beginning*

In the beginning, *Home Power* magazine was printed on a local web press, the kind that prints newspapers. Every part of every page of the magazine was physically assembled onto pasteup "boards" that the printer photographed with a copy camera to make film negatives. The printer then used the film to "burn" the image onto aluminum lithography plates, which were used for the actual printing.

Articles were typeset on computers (really early Macs). Pages were then printed out on a special paper used for pasteup. Advertisements were either constructed on the computers or they came in by mail, and they were also prepared for pasteup. Text and art for both articles and ads were separate items that did not meet until they were pasted up.

## *Pasteup*

Pasteup was a ritual. The day would start early with every flat surface in the room being cleared and scrubbed. We had two long tables, like the kind used at church socials. We placed these strategically, one in the middle of the room, the other behind the couch that defined the living room area. We had a desk with a portable, slanted desktop placed on top. Richard brought his own folding, slant-top desk. These were positioned by windows for the best light, and had their own lamps to boot—compact fluorescents, of course.

At first, Richard was the only one to actually paste up the pages. But with *HP19*, the first color cover issue, Richard began training Bob-O for page pasting as well.

Before touching anything, everyone, especially Richard and Bob-O, washed their hands with Dawn dishwashing liquid. Several times. No surgeon would have been more thorough. The large artist portfolio that contained the

printed pages, photos, and ad materials was placed on one of the large tables for Karen to organize and prep.

First came the mixing of the thinner and rubber cement adhesive used on the pages. It had to be just the right consistency. Karen was in charge of that. She set up the other long table for painting the adhesive onto the pages and materials. Next, all the tools of pasteup were brought to the ready. They were carefully cleaned and placed by their respective desk stations. Large gummy erasers, T squares, lamps, glasses, markers, X-acto knives, and transparent rulers were all put in their places.

When pasteup actually began, it was a steady rhythm of movement. First the back of each printed page was completely painted with adhesive and given to Richard or Bob-O at their stations. These pages were placed on the base sheet, which held four individual pages. These had to be in a specific (non-numeric) order and position so that when our printer, Valley Web, printed the pages, they would be in the correct order.

For each page, the back of the appropriate ads, graphics, and photos were also painted with rubber cement and brought to Richard and Bob-O. These needed to be carefully attached, nice and straight, to the pages. As they worked on that sheet, the next sheet would be gummed and that page's material set out to be ready.

When they finished a four-page sheet, Karen whisked it (very carefully) into a fresh cardboard portfolio. As the number of pages in each issue grew, friends and neighbors, and at times even I, assisted in the process.

## *My Kitchen*

My place was in the kitchen. I supplied finger foods to keep everyone's strength up. It was great for me. I love planning meals and treats. I would always provide some known crew favorites, and I would try some new hors d'oeuvres each time. Not being a perfectionist, pasteup was best left out of my hands.

I kept a smaller folding table constantly supplied with food and drinks. When there was a slight break in the action, any of the crew could readily find refreshment.

Meanwhile in the kitchen, I was cooking the main meal of the day—the dinner where we all sat down together



**Bob-O laboring over a four-page pasteup sheet of *Home Power*, circa 1991–1992.**

when the work was done. Admittedly that was the best part of the day for me. We could all relax and talk. It was just a big family meal around one of the long tables.

Sometimes the Wizard or our neighbor Stan would show up. It was a time to socialize, to gather. When I think of those days of the small *Home Power* crew and the times we spent together, I miss it.

### Mail Stop

When the issue was due to be delivered from the printer, we got together again. In preparation for that rendezvous, Richard spent literally days printing out mailing labels on a dot matrix printer. We would all meet down at the Hornbrook post office at midmorning. Soon the truck from Valley Web Printers would show up, and the work began.

The magazines were unloaded from the printer's truck into our pickup trucks. Backing up to the back porch of the post office, we used the tailgates of our pickups as tables. One group put all the first class subscriptions into manila envelopes. These already had their labels attached. They were sealed and stacked and put on a postal cart for Elden, our postmaster, to process. The other group put labels on all the third class subs. These were then stacked and bagged by zip code—not each and every zip code, but a range of codes for a geographical area. These too went onto carts for Elden to process. This took several hours.

All the leftover issues were left in their boxes. The boxes were marked with their issue number on all sides with a black marker. Earlier issues didn't have boxes; they were bundled and tied with white cotton string. They did not need marking. All the leftovers were now considered back issues. They were loaded into the pickups and brought back to be stored in our basement.

### Betty's Kitchen

After we finished mailing, we walked across the parking lot over a small walkway and into Betty's Country Kitchen. Betty's husband Bob was the "waitress." It was an ongoing joke with him. It was a tiny little place. Along one wall was a free library. Bring a book or take a book. No one kept track.

We would all order the same thing—Betty's cheeseburger and fries. Real cheeseburgers, with fresh sliced onions and tomatoes. Real fries, made right then, with the skins still on. Lunch could easily take an hour-and-a-half. Not because the food was slow in coming—it wasn't. It was because we lingered and talked. Not just among ourselves, but with Betty and Bob and any locals who happened to be there. Gustatory memories can be very strong. I can almost taste that food now.

I know it seems like we spent a lot of time eating. But that is what we did when we got together. We would work hard and then eat together. The basic and ancient ritual of friends is breaking bread together.

Now the magazine goes to the publisher on disk, and the digital files are transferred "direct-to-plate" without cameras or film. The subscriptions are mailed from the printer in Wisconsin, where they have their own postmaster and postal station on premises. I send my column in by e-mail. It is now rarer that we can all get together anymore. That time and closeness has passed, as all things do. *Home Power* magazine is bigger than we ever dreamed. I can say I was there in the early days.

### Access

Kathleen Jarschke-Schultze is busy in her organic garden and orchard at her home in northernmost California. c/o *Home Power* magazine, PO Box 520, Ashland, OR 97520 • [kathleen.jarschke-schultze@homepower.com](mailto:kathleen.jarschke-schultze@homepower.com)

