

THE FOSSIL

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REMEMBERING VIC MOITORET

A Salute to Victor Moitoret

Martha E. Shivvers

In the Southwest of this country
Near Silver City town
Among the cactus and the yucca
In the foothills of the mountains
Lived stalwart stately Victor
With his lovely wife Rowena,
A son, and their daughters.

Once captain in the Navy
Patrolling rough sea waters
He became the guardian of the archives
Of NAPA's contributions.
All who knew him called him disciplined,
Trustworthy could have been his name.

Countless were the stories written
Of adventure, bits of wisdom
For fulfillment, not seeking praise or
fame.

Bon voyage, courageous warrior
Sailing off on eternal seas
You will be missed by all who knew you,
Leaving cherished memories to appease.

Memories of a Fellow Serviceman and Ajay

Alvin S. Fick

Interviewed by Leland M. Hawes, Jr.

When Al Fick met Victor Moitoret for the first time, in the late 1950s, either at a convention or at an Amateur Printers Club meeting, the two Navy men talked over mutual experiences in the Pacific during World War II.

Not far into the conversation, Al told Vic, "I saw your ship get hit."

Al, a flight captain aboard the aircraft carrier *USS Lexington*, had witnessed a Japanese dive-bomber swoop down over the *USS Princeton*, about a quarter mile away. The *Princeton* was an aircraft carrier, too, and Vic was serving as a navigator aboard.

"I had a clear vision," Al recalled. "The *Princeton's* guns were firing. The plane dropped down and the bomb was like a fly speck. It hit the deck and was spewing flames. There was a huge explosion."

The *Princeton* had to drop out of the formation of carriers in which it was sailing. "The crew went over the side after trying to save the ship," Al remembered.

This incident in 1944 was the second in which Vic had to "swim away" after a carrier was sinking. (The first was the *USS Hornet*.) Fortunately, he survived both and came back to mainland USA to marry Rowena Autry in 1945.

Al Fick had not been involved in amateur journalism until he joined the American Amateur Press Association in the early 1950s. A few years later, he joined the National. It was only then that he met Victor Moitoret, and they discovered they had been on adjacent vessels in that wartime battle.

The two became friends, and in later years the two families visited each other. The Ficks visited the Moitorets at their home in Silver City, New Mexico.

Part of the ritual of a stop there was signing an ajay table-cloth in which their names would be embroidered by Rowena Moitoret.

"They lived on a hill and had a garden with apple trees," Al said. "When we left, we took apples with us."

During their stay, Vic took the Ficks to see a branch of the state university where he was a member of the board of trustees. A shiny bronze plaque had just been erected on one of the buildings, and Vic was getting his first glimpse of it. To his dismay, he found that his name had been misspelled.

Following a National convention in Baltimore, he and Rowena gave Al and Alma Fick a personal tour of the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, his alma mater. Al especially remembers going through Bancroft Hall and seeing the tomb of John Paul Jones under constant watch by a sailor.

“Vic loved the Navy,” Al said. And he also loved the National. The first issue of his journal, *The Victorian*, was published shortly after his birth in 1919 by his father, Anthony Moitoret. And his publishing career continued through a series of additional titles over his lifetime.

And So They Were Married

Lieutenant Victor A. Moitoret, U.S.N.

Reprinted from *The Victorian* (no. 12)
May 1945

“But how did you come to meet a girl in Texas?” they invariably inquire.

“Well, you see, it's quite a story,” is my answer.

And it *is* quite a story. Here that story is told—and as you read, remember you are not reading a fairy tale—it happened just like this...

I. Topeka, Kansas, 1938

The feature page editor of the magazine *Household* reread the poems that the girl in Texas had hopefully submitted for publication. There was something about the poetry that made one want to reread it. Yes, this was definitely not a case calling for the stark, impersonal, stereotyped wording of an ordinary rejection slip—this called for some tangible reaction on her part, even though it was impossible to accept the poetry for her page because she was supplied with more poetry at the moment than the magazine could use for months to come. So the feature page editor sat down to her typewriter and wrote a letter to the young Texas lass, explaining in detail why the poetry could not be accepted, and, going one step further, suggesting that perhaps it might find acceptance in the Methodist Church paper, *Cargo*, which used poetry of that type occasionally...

II. Annapolis, Maryland, 1938

The Naval Academy was a far more pleasant surrounding that second year for the boy from California. Gone were the hard days of being a plebe for an entire year and never ever finding all the answers to the questions that flowed in such an unending stream from all the upper classmen. A “youngster” didn't have to walk in the middle of the corridors and cut square corners and double-time up and down the “ladders.” Life was definitely more fun...

III. Fort Pierre, South Dakota, 1938

Reverend John B. Schlarb found that copy of *Cargo* that he had marked upon first reading and sat down to write a letter to the Rowena Autry, age 15, who had written the poem in which he had detected rare feeling and no little talent. Here, he thought, was a likely prospect for the National Amateur Press Association—he was ever on the lookout for promising young writers to whom the nature of his fond hobby might be unknown and unsuspected. He'd drop her a line and send her a few sample papers...

IV. Cuthbert, Texas, 1938

Picking cotton (or “pulling bolls,” as it is called in West Texas) is not easy work, bending low over the rows and stuffing white fluff into a nine foot sack that grows heavier with each forward step. But with her brother and her sisters working beside her and her Dad, too, it seemed more like a family affair than pure labor—and there was beauty to be found even here in the cotton field, if one had an eye for beauty, and a mind that could find words to put that beauty into writing—into singing poetry. No, there was never a lack of subjects for her poems, and now, just the day before, her first check had arrived, in the wake of a string of rejection slips—a check for three dollars from *Cargo* magazine for three of her poems. Already her dreams raced ahead of reality, and she tried to pierce the veil of the future and see herself established as a professional poet of wide renown. But meanwhile the cotton was waiting....

Rowena didn't quite understand the letter from the gentleman in South Dakota—how could people be interested in writing and publishing just for fun—as a hobby—without receiving any material reward for their efforts? No, she'd tell the gentleman that she was sorry, but she was not interested. At fifteen, she was already in her own eyes a professional....

Well, if he offered to pay her dues and to print one of her poems as the “credential” which he explained was necessary for joining this N.A.P.A., she certainly had nothing to lose, she reasoned—so she answered Rev. Schlarb's second letter by agreeing to become a member of his club....

V. Annapolis, Maryland, 1938

Leave periods for Uncle Sam's Midshipmen would not be so appreciated if they were not so infrequent. But Midshipman Vic Moitoret managed to devote a part of each leave to his hobby of amateur journalism—utilizing presses that belonged to friends in

Philadelphia, Jersey City, Great Neck on Long Island, Elizabeth in New Jersey, and Seattle, Washington, to keep his hand in at setting type and feeding a press....

VI. Cuthbert, Texas, 1939

Even after a year of membership in the organization and after having received and glanced over the printed offerings of amateurs scattered across the nation, Rowena could see little point in the hobby. Besides, one of her poems had just been accepted for publication in the *American* magazine—she had come quite a way in her professional career in the space of a year. But her older sister, Viola, had found the amateur papers intriguing. “You’ve got to renew your membership, Rowena, so you’ll still get these papers every month so that I can read them”....

VII. Cuthbert, Texas, 1940

Alice Womack was fascinated by the amount of mail that her favorite cousin, Rowena Autry, seemed to be receiving all the time from all kinds of people all over the country—all, it seemed, as a result of their having seen her poetry in amateur papers. These N.A.P.A. members were apparently quite avid correspondents. Maybe she could find someone among them with whom she might correspond, too. Would Rowena let her look through the membership list?....

VIII. Annapolis, Maryland, 1940

The Battalion Commander of the First Battalion of the Regiment of Midshipmen returned to his room after the dress parade, hung up his sword, and glanced at the table to see what the mail had brought. There was a letter from his mother in Seattle with news of home, and a postcard from Texas...from Colorado City...nice handwriting, but who in the world was Alice Womack, and how did she ever happen to get his address? She wanted to trade Texas tales for stories about the Naval Academy, she said—well, he’d no time to be writing to someone he’d never heard of in a town he’d never heard of in a state he’d never been in—too many other irons in the fire these days....

IX. Springfield, Ohio, April 11, 1942

Miss Willametta Turnepseed had been clever. She had written to the two sisters down in Cuthbert, Texas, individually, and asked each of them to write a sketch of the other without letting the other know that it was being done, and now both were published side by side in the *Literary Newszette*. That should surprise

both Viola and Rowena....

X. Seattle, Washington, 1942

Those two sisters must be interesting people, thought Mrs. Dora Hepner Moitoret, as she put down the *Literary Newszette*—they have the freshness of the West in them, and the honesty of the wide open spaces. Maybe, too, they might have called back to her memories of her own young days on a farm in Ohio when she first began finding poetry around her. She must write to them....

XI. Somewhere in the South Pacific, 1942

Ensign Vic Moitoret, the Assistant Navigator of the new aircraft carrier *Hornet*, was in a fix. Every girl that he had ever known, even remotely, it seemed, was engaged or married—he was losing all contact with the feminine world of his contemporaries, and the idea did not suit him. He wanted to be getting mail from some girl back home, too, when mail call sounded. Yes, it was a desperate chance, he admitted to himself, but then the situation seemed to demand desperate action, and so he dug up the postcard from the unknown girl with the pretty handwriting from somewhere in Texas—he knew he had it somewhere in his “unanswered” file, and he wrote to her. Would she please include a snapshot when she answered?....

XII. Manzano Mountains, New Mexico, April, 1942

The two cousins, Rowena and Alice, were really enjoying their vacation. They always found enjoyment in the times they had together, regardless of the surroundings, but with these scenic Manzano Mountains for a backdrop, they were close to their own personal paradise. The pines, the peaks, the streams, the green wooded slopes, the trails—naturally, they took pictures to preserve the occasion indelibly to be recalled again and again in the future....

XIII. Off Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, Oct., 1942

The *Hornet's* days were busy ones, but there must always be time for living, too, in between the action-packed days of battle. Mail was irregular—there had been one interval of 42 days, six whole weeks, without the arrival aboard of a single letter for anyone—but then when it did come, it came in avalanches. The latest landslide brought the assistant navigator his share, but three items caught his eye and held his attention after the rest of the mail was disposed of: there was the packet of letters his mother

had sent, as she was in the habit of doing—letters that she had received from people he knew, or from people who had mentioned him, or just letters that were interesting. By sending these all on to him she knew that she would thus double the amount of mail which might ordinarily be his lot to receive. This last collection had included a letter from some girl in Texas named Rowena Autry, who wrote to describe herself and her surroundings and to go into detail about a ramble she had taken in search of agarita berries. It was a nice letter—no, “nice” was too trite a word—it was a *different* letter—it almost breathed the freshness of pine woods and the smell of both dusty, dry arroyos and damp soil after rain. It must have been written by someone with an appreciation of the out of doors very much akin to his own. And, let's see, wasn't it that same Rowena Autry whose poem “Joy” had been printed in *The Peer*, Rev. Schlarb's paper, that had come, too, in this last mail in the monthly bundle of the National Amateur Press Association. It *was* the same person. And, too, here was the snapshot that Alice Womack had sent, as requested—a snapshot picturing, she said, herself with her cousin, Rowena Autry (the same one!), taken while they were enjoying an outing in the Manzano Mountains of New Mexico. Since the snapshot was intended to show the surrounding scenery as much as the two girls in the center of the picture, one couldn't be too sure of just how the girls looked, it's true, but this Rowena appeared to be rather cute....

That night the lights burned late in the stateroom of the assistant navigator as he set himself to the task of writing to this Rowena Autry—not one letter, but three—each a separate and disparate missive. One began with a reference to having received the letter that she had written to his mother in Seattle. The second used her poem in the amateur paper as a point of mutual interest and built up on that motif. And the third centered upon the fact that he had just received a snapshot of her from her cousin and would welcome doubling the number of his feminine correspondents in Texas....

XIV. N.W. of the Santa Cruz Islands, Oct. 26, 1942

He had been in the water almost two and a half hours, now, after going over the side and down the knotted line from the hangar deck of his stricken home. It was near sunset and that last attack must have been the final one, so that soon the circling destroyers must again come in toward the listing hulk of the once proud *Hornet* to continue picking up survivors....

XV. Cuthbert, Texas, November, 1942

That there should be three letters in the mail box for her was certainly an unexpected event in the life of the fair Texas miss who walked down from the farmhouse that morning in her blue jeans and true Texas style boots—but that all three should be from one and the same person, and that person a stranger, and all postmarked the same day, was almost beyond belief. But she had held to the firm belief that a letter deserves an answer, and so she resolved that this fellow should have three answers. And she made good on that resolution and sent off the letters, one at a time, as she finished them. (She could have no knowledge that the U.S.S. *Hornet* to which she addressed the letters was now beneath the waves of the wide Pacific—that news was not released until a much later date)....

XVI. Camden, New Jersey, February, 1943

Mail addressed to Lieutenant Moitoret was directed to the office over the door of which was the neatly painted sign: “Navigator—U.S.S. PRINCETON” in the building which housed the pre-commissioning detail for the carrier which was near completion in the bays of the New York Shipbuilding Corporation. And it was to this office that the mail clerk brought the stack of mail that had been readdressed by the Fleet Post Office in San Francisco—mail originally destined for the *Hornet*. And among those long-delayed letters were three from Cuthbert, Texas. She had answered all three of them! But that was already almost four months ago—she must have wondered why he had not had the courtesy to answer them—he'd better write immediately and tell her that he had just now received her replies....

XVII. Big Spring, Texas, February, 1943

The night foreman in the work order department at the Big Spring Army Air Force Bombardier School found time to write a letter. Rowena was busy, indeed, now, doing her part to aid the return of all the Victors from all over the world. But this night shift offered some spare quiet moments for letter writing. She must thank him for sending that book, *Living High*—it had touched a very responsive chord in her....

XVIII. Pacific Ocean, 1943

Tiny Baker Island's occupation, then a quick, hard strike at Tarawa, then down to the South Pacific to the old hunting grounds to smash at Buka and Bonis on Bougainville, to take part in the first carrier air

strikes against the Jap stronghold of Rabaul, with a repeat performance less than a week later, then on to neutralize Nauru while the Marines landed at Tarawa—the *Princeton's* track lay all across the broad Pacific, but the mail followed and brought a fresh touch of Texas to the navigator with each coming. Then came December and the carrier touched home waters briefly for navy yard work, and the navigator spent his first Christmas at home in six years. He telegraphed Texas to invite her to Seattle for the holidays, but the answer came back that no Christmas leaves were granted to the civilian employees at the air base....

XIX. Big Spring, Texas, January, 1944

The girl in pigtails handed the repaired carburetor air duct to the flight sergeant and showed him where to sign the printed form. Out on the ramp she could see a C-47 discharging passengers—one of them was a naval officer—could it be...no, he was taller than that in his pictures. It seemed funny to feel that she knew him so well already without ever having met him face to face....

XX. Pacific Ocean, 1944

Wojte, Taroa, and Kwajalein, in the Marshalls, then Eniwetok, Palau, Hollandia in New Guinea, Truk, Saipan, Guam, Tinian, Palau again, Mindanao in the Philippines, the Visayas, Luzon, Okinawa, Formosa, and then back to help MacArthur stage his return—the *Princeton* had few idle moments as the tempo of the war stepped up ever faster. Then on October 24, 1944, came the sudden attack off Luzon, the fires, the magazine explosion, and the wounded navigator was saying good-bye to another proud carrier....

XXI. Big Spring, Texas, December 9, 1944

The foreman of the work order department stayed home in bed that Saturday morning with a headache. She had missed very few days from work and those only when her absence was a necessity. She was still asleep when her younger sister, Katherine, who should have been at work in the sheet metal shop at the air base, came bursting in the door with the cry, "Get up, Vic's here!" And in a few minutes, leaving her time only to comb her hair, Vic was there—the long journey from the Philippines to Texas had taken lots longer than he had wanted—but he was here now, where he had yearned to be for so long....

XXII. Albuquerque, New Mexico, Dec. 31, 1944

There were few early birds up in Albuquerque at four o'clock in the morning to see the Red Mercury pause in front of a cafe while the navy lieutenant, driving through from Seattle, went in to get a cup of coffee to keep him going—he had not stopped at all during this past night. But the stop was brief—it was ten days already since he had left Big Spring, Texas, by air to fly home for Christmas, and already ten days seemed like an equal number of months. The Red Mercury left Albuquerque before the sun arrived....

XXIII. Big Spring, Texas, December 31, 1944

The sun was just sliding down over the western horizon—the flat western horizon of West Texas—when the car drew up to the house. "Happy New Year, Darling!"....

XXIV. Big Spring, Texas, January 1, 1945

It was such a beautiful day. The Texas sun had never seemed so bright—at least, not in January when one might just as well expect rain or even snow. It was the first day in a new year. It was the 25th wedding anniversary of Rowena's parents. All in all it was a wonderful day to be married. The county clerk was caught in his office, even though it was a holiday, and he should have been elsewhere—the man in the back of the jewelry store obligingly opened the side door and let them come in to choose two rings—what else could he do? And the pastor of the church was glad to take them into his parlor and ask them to stand together while he repeated the simple but meaningful words....

It was *such* a beautiful day!

How I Became A Printer

Victor A. Moitoret

Reprinted from *The Fossil*, July 1961

As the son of a professional newspaper writer, it was almost inevitable that I should absorb the parental influence to the extent of working on the editorial side of school and Boy Scout publications, and this activity put me first into the fringe area of the printing world. But in addition to earning his living as a journalist, my father from his own boyhood had also found amateur journalism and hobby printing to be one more outlet for his creative talent with words. The

hobby had been dormant to a great extent while four children were to be raised, but when I reached the age of fifteen and started showing similar interests, my father's own spark was rekindled, and one day an 8x12 Chandler & Price printing press, acquired secondhand, appeared in our basement at Oakland, California.

Yes, we had a press, but no type and no motor, yet we began printing anyway, almost immediately. All the copy for the first issue of *The Encinal*, official organ of the infant Oakland Amateur Press Club, was set by machine composition, and we managed to lock the Linotype slugs into the chase under my dad's guidance. Then, with one boy-power engaged in turning the flywheel by hand, we ran off 500 copies of an 8-page issue.

About the same time I signed up for the printing course available at my high school in addition to the journalism course. This was in my 10th grade class at high school, and beginning printers were given a diagram of the case lay and set to work standing each piece of type carefully and neatly on end in rows in the boxes, sorting out all wrong font letters, then learning the spacing material the same way. Quickly we progressed to setting type by hand, running the job presses, the paper cutter, and eventually the Intertype machines and the flatbed press used to produce our own school paper. This newspaper, the *Piedmont Highlander*, was somewhat unique for its class—published weekly and consisting generally of four pages, but quite often eight and sometimes even twelve or sixteen pages, of the same size as a regular newspaper. We sold advertising, had staff photographers, and our make-up was strongly patterned after the New York *Herald Tribune*, with conservative style in typography and balanced boxes, engravings, and two column heads as strong factors. As I moved up to associate editor, my printing training aided me in my jobs as principal proofreader and headline writer—and if my careful letter-counts on the bank heads and pyramid subheads didn't result in a fit, or if a new advertisement had to be squeezed in on page two after the galley proofs had been carefully fitted into the page dummies, it was a great benefit for me to be able to dash over to the Intertype myself and reset the troublesome overlong headline or to recompose the final paragraph of a story to shorten it to fit right at the machine's keyboard.

Meanwhile, the basement print shop at home continued to grow as type and rules and ornaments were added, and I earned quite a bit of pocket money doing stationery and tickets and odd jobs for friends in my spare time, in addition to continuing the amateur journal printing that was the center of interest for our home shop. A year at a university, four years at the

Naval Academy, and then naval service during the war removed me from close contact with the hobby except on visits to other amateur print shops in several parts of the U.S. But with my first shore leave and my marriage to a Texas lass who shared the writing part of the amateur journalism hobby already, it was less than six months before we became the proud owners of our own 8x12 C&P press, acquired in Baltimore, Maryland in 1945. The press has since moved to Boston, to California, and to three different locations in Maryland. At present, during my current three-year tour in England, that same press stands under a heavy coat of grease in the basement of our home in Camp Springs, Maryland, awaiting our return to the U.S.A.

A travelling serviceman finds many obstacles in the way against following the printing craft as a hobby—yet there is one great advantage. His travels can bring him into contact with a large number of printers, and I have yet to visit another fellow printer's shop and talk printing with him without adding some further small bit of know-how to my continuing education.

Because

Because you cared for those who moved about you
And offered them all care you could supply;
Because you lived an honest, upright man,
A model left behind to edify;
Because you loved your country deeply, truly,
A burning flame that would not, could not die;
Because you gave us these and more, we say:
“God bless you, Vic. Dear Vic, Good-bye, Good-bye.”

—Your “Cuz” Louise Lincoln

FOSSIL PORTRAIT: LOUISE LINCOLN

I was born in Columbus, Ohio, February 12, 1912, a Lincoln born on Abe Lincoln's birthday. My parents, Gertrude and Charles Lincoln, had three daughters of whom I was the middle one. I was baptized and confirmed in the Lutheran Church and church is still a central part of my life.

In 1934 I was graduated from Capital University with a B.A. in education certifying me as a teacher, major subject Latin, minors Math, English and history. At the graduation ceremonies I received the Ackerman award, given to the female student with the highest academic standing plus extra-curricular activities. Mine were debate and amateur theatricals. A leading lady I was not; mine were always the supporting actress roles.

All of this was in line with my determination

that in those depression years if there was only one teaching position available I would be the one best qualified to receive it. That was when I learned it isn't what you know but who you know that counts. Columbus was not hiring inexperienced teachers. Rural schools were hiring their own people.

So I spent a year doing odd jobs. One was baby-sitting an office while its supervisors traveled. Two others were jury duty. The first was a paternity case that was settled out of court while the jurors went to lunch. The other was a murder trial where I was the 13th juror. None of the 12 became disabled, so I didn't get to vote on the verdict which was murder in the first degree. The D.A. looked at me and I shook my head. It could have been self-defense instead of pre-meditated murder depending on... I learned later even the D.A. was surprised at the verdict.

During that fallow year my father died suddenly. In August I finally received a teaching position, courtesy of a fellow graduate who had recommended me to the school board when she received a last-minute appointment to her local school. After three years at Clark Consolidated, I entered the Columbus school system, brought there by influential friends. Thirty-two years later I retired.

In 1971 I came with my mother and older sister to Tucson, Arizona. A week later our mother died. Until Gert's death in 1999 she and I lived happily together. We respected each other's different interests and shared a common passion for travel. Gert had been a TWA employee so she used her passes and I used my savings to take us to Europe and Hawaii. When the long flights became too much for Gert, we switched over to 13 cruises on the Mississippi Queen, exploring America's inland rivers. My allegiance has now been transferred to the River Barge Explorer line, a smaller paddlewheel boat that is actually towed along smaller rivers. The three persons who were traveling companions in the past have all died, so I go alone. Some call that courage. I call it preferring my own company to looking for someone compatible. Living alone can make you selfish, or overly anxious to please.

That's enough of my personal life. Let's turn now to my life as a writer and member of the National Amateur Press Association.

I began scribbling verses when I was six or seven years old. They were silly stuff which led my mother to say I should write more serious things. I told her I would rather make people laugh than cry, a principle I still adhere to, though I can be serious or philosophical as well. My prose essays blend the two. Those early scribbles gained me entrance into a young writers' club sponsored by the local newspaper.

Years later I joined an Ohio poets guild and had some poems printed in their publication. A sonnet sequence became the front page of the Easter issue of *The Lutheran Standard*, the official magazine of the A.L.C.

After a tour in Italy with the Vergilian Society, I became president of the Columbus Latin teachers' association. By virtue of office, I was expected to be the speaker at the last meeting of the year. I gathered up the assortment of poems I had written in Italy and read to the tour group. To them I added a tale about the reaction of the displaced Olympian Gods when one of their number visited a temple that had become a Christian church, a yarn written on the long flight from Rome to New York. The editor of the *Classical Journal* was present. He scooped up the whole lot and printed it in the *Journal*. I think that was my last official publication. Tales about the doings of the Gods were delivered at a number of meetings of classical scholars and one of them was printed in a different organization's journal.

Which brings me to my affiliation with the NAPA when I became my own publisher. I joined the year the annual convention overflowed from Springfield to Columbus. The poetry guild was invited to attend, and I joined the NAPA. Alf Babcock deserves credit for giving me the best advice any member could receive: if you really want to enjoy this hobby, publish your own paper.

The first few issues of the *Kitchen Stove* were printed by a local professional. Then Alf volunteered for the job and did it until he died. Melody and David Warner were subsequent printers. Now it's Guy Miller. In case anyone wonders, yes, I pay them for what I can't do, but the fee is modest, enough to cover the cost of materials used. Vic Moitoret gave me the stove cut that was added after the first few issues and established the format. After 81 issues, I am toying with ideas for #82.

I have been asked more than once how A. Walrus got into the act. My response has been several apocryphal stories. The truth is, I bought him at a corner drugstore when his not-so-bright look appealed to me. I named him A. Walrus, the "A" standing for "Another" so he wouldn't be confused with Lewis Carroll's Walrus. He became my co-editor, being in charge of the Department of Utter Nonsense. As my alter ego he attends conventions, bringing along his own tuxedo and changes of clothing.

My official services to the NAPA include several terms as Executive Judge, Secretary-Treasurer, and Recorder. I have no idea how many times I have recorded the minutes. As Secretary-Treasurer it was my job for four years. When recording was switched to the Recorder, it came with permission to ask someone

else to do the job. I was asked and I did. I was drafted when the Recorder was a no-show. All this repetition enabled me to train officers to leave their official reports with me so I could turn them over to the next editor, and made me so familiar with Robert's Rules of Order I could help the presiding officer if necessary.

I very much regret seeing membership in amateur groups decline. For that there may be a number of explanations. The "me" generation wants to be entertained rather than exert any effort to entertain itself. Aspiring writers want to be paid for their output, not submit it to a bundle at their own expense. Perhaps we would be more successful in recruiting members if we looked for older people who have given up expecting to sell their work, but who would still like to have an outlet and an audience for it. Personally, I know I never had the compelling urge to make writing a career. A.J. gives me all the encouragement I need to keep me writing what I think when some spark—often a newspaper article—ignites my imagination.

As for letting members use the Internet to print their journals, it could boost membership by appealing to a computer user generation. It could also be contrary to our constitution which specifies *printed* papers by members. Since the constitution was adopted before computers were invented, maybe it needs to be rewritten via the amendment route. Electronic journals would also play havoc with the Laureate Awards as they now stand, and they would deprive non-computer users of papers. Maybe we need another a.j. group open to computer users who could write their own constitution. Maybe the existing a.j. groups will have to settle for smaller numbers, tailor their budgets to meet their expenses, and depart from the peaks of the past to the flat-lands of today. At least I didn't say cemetery instead of flat-lands.

While most issues of the *Kitchen Stove* have been prose, I write more poetry. Poetry is not particularly welcome in amateur journals, being used as a "filler" rather than a chosen entry. Perhaps that's just as well since most of what is called poetry by the writers, I would call trash. This is a subject on which I have said much in the NAPA publications, notably Harold Segal's *Campane*.

To summarize for those without access to that journal: There is light verse which is fun and easy to write. Real poetry has rhyme, meter and, most of all, the ability to arouse emotion in the reader. Lyric verse belongs there, and hardest to write, the sonnet. Haiku are no more than counted lines. Strings of lines set down to look like poetry but reading like prose are not poetry. Still, I admit some of them do have that essential ingredient of stirring an emotional response and those I am willing to accept as poetry. Al Fick is

such a writer.

The Fossil editor asked me to set down some of my own compositions as proof I do write poetry. One of my light verses is:

Lift up your heads, you downcast souls,
To nobler heights aspire.
See how a match can start from scratch
And set the world on fire!

For a sonnet:

I never knew the world could be so still
Until you died, and left me kneeling there
Within the room our life had loved to share.
The distant mourning of a whip-poor-will
Seemed close beside me, pouring out its fill
Of tears I could not shed. And ev'rywhere
The silent shadows crept—across your hair,
Your face, your hands—your hands so strangely
still.

And sometimes yet I pause at eventide
To hear the laughter that was part of you,
Or wake at night to touch you by my side;
Forgetting you have gone, and these things, too.
It is not death that makes the spirit break,
But loneliness and silence in its wake.

This one is just because I like it:

There comes a stillness at the heart of
Christmas-time:

God's quiet peace.
The storms of daily living swirl about, but here
All conflicts cease.
Then one clear "Alleluia" sounds across the sky
On Christmas Eve.
Then one bright star, new minted, shines to dim
the rest,
And we believe
Within this hushed, this waiting hour, God gives
His son
To human birth.
His power, grace and love, incarnate now, come
down
To bless the earth
With quietness and peace.

Before I go back to reading detective stories (Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe, Agatha Christie, Ngaio Marsh, H. C. Bailey) or solving crossword and other puzzles, A. Walrus wants to close this interview with his own two cents worth:

"The time has come," A. Walrus said,
"To note the varied things

To which, as time goes strolling by,
The name of fossil clings.
Old people who have passed their prime
Are *Fossils* to young souls.
Imprints of ferns and long gone trees
Are *Fossils* left on coals.
The forms of sea-life from the first
Now see the light of day
As *Fossil* forms imbedded in
The solid mud and clay.
But of them all there yet remains
The *Fossil* I profess
To be superior to the lot,
And it's the *Fossil* press.”

As long ago as last fall, I asked Louise Lincoln if she would consider doing an interview by mail for The Fossil and suggested to her topics for discussion. Louise's busy holiday schedule intervened, and then just days before a planned cruise in January, she fell and broke her hip. I learned of these developments only after I asked Louise if she would consider submitting a poetic tribute to Vic Moitoret. She informed me that she was writing from the rehabilitation facility where she was working to regain strength so that she could go home. The last thing I expected was that Louise would complete her Fossil interview while still confined to the rehabilitation facility. But then on March 28, just a few days before the cut-off for the April issue, I received Louise's nine-page manuscript, beautifully written in her legible hand. "It was written while I sat in bed with the pad on my knee, and lacking a dictionary to check the spelling," wrote Louise. I am sure I don't have to assure our readers that Louise's spelling was just fine. If there are any errors in the text, they are mine and not Louise's.

Louise's account bespeaks the faith, energy, intellect and sense of humor which have yielded for her a long and rich life—as a teacher, a scholar, a writer, and an amateur journalist. The note accompanying her manuscript contains these words which indicate the high value she places on the amateur journalism hobby: "One thing I did fail to include: The Fossil awarded me the Russell Paxton plaque for contributions to A.J. I prize it even as I think others deserved it more."

We all thank Louise for her many years of generous contributions to the amateur journalism hobby. Get-well wishes can reach Louise at 1429 South Park Lane, Tucson, AZ 85710.

WHEN AND NOW

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Guy Miller

Anyone who has had the task of beheading a chicken knows that the act must be swift before the bird can make eye contact. Otherwise, you're rapidly reduced to a quavering porridge of guilt, doubt, and indecision. For the very same reason, when one plans to dispose of past correspondence, it's not a good idea to pause to re-read anything. There is so much detail of the human drama therein that one can be easily persuaded that each discarded phrase poses a disservice to the memories of the dedicated individuals who underwent those blow-by-blow struggles. Thus was the dilemma involving the one and a half inch depth of correspondence relating to the events leading up to and involving the transfer of the Library of Amateur Journalism. But practicality must prevail; so, now the pile is a manageable one half inch resting in my file cabinet. One day, of course, when the cabinet is groaning from overweight, the mass must be revisited. But that's for when: This is now.

And the "now" is the good news that we have filled all of our official vacancies. Lee Hawes has consented to step in as our vice president and chairman of the Russell L. Paxton Memorial Award for Service to Amateur Journalism. Sean Donnelly has taken over the office of Historian, thereby relieving our Official Editor Ken Faig from doing double duty. Les Boyer will serve on the Gold Composing Stick Committee along side of Tom Parson and Chairman Stan Oliner. Finally, David Tribby will work as our Webmaster as he transfers material originally assembled by Librarian Mike Horvat for the LAJ website to a new location. We will have more to report on that project as time goes on.

Not good news is that of the death of one of the forever giants of amateur journalism, Victor A. Moitoret. Truly the historian's historian, Vic gave to us both instruction through his critiques and an awareness of the rich heritage of our beloved hobby through his carefully documented commentaries. Although primarily active in NAPA, he still lavished time and talent on the pursuits of The Fossils, Inc., especially during his terms as Official Editor (1963-64) and President (1988-90). Moreover, he was ever eager to give personal encouragement, advice, and assistance to those of us engaged in individual endeavors. I leave it to others to carry his eulogy further. In this regard, I think you will agree that, in this issue of *The Fossil*, Official Editor Ken Faig has done an admirable job.

TWO POEMS OF NATURE

THE CLOAK OF FOG

Martha E. Shivers

With the stealth of a thief, fog crept in,
shrouds engulfing everything within its fold;
highways, buildings, people and clouds,
covering them all with icy damp cold
clinging to everything, shaping a mold.
Birds, searching shelter and food in the storm
hid in pine trees nearby on the run,
shoving, eating, vying the most bold
while all awaited the unfolding sun.

NOCTURNE

Bertha Grant Avery

The early moon's thin cycle
Is caught upon a pine,
While three pilgrim stars are peering through its
green:
Now tremblingly enrapt
Its murmurings all stilled
The giant tree is yielded to radiance serene.

The waning moon's soft glory
Is caught in twilight's flare—
The moon-glow and star-shine are intermingled
light:
My thoughts like wheeling planets
Go paling down the sky
And waits my soul adoring upon transcendent
night.

PUBLICATION NOTES

W. Paul Cook, *Willis T. Crossman's Vermont: Stories by W. Paul Cook* (Tampa FL: University of Tampa Press, 2005), xxi+165pp., ISBN 1-879852-34-9 (cloth), 1-879852-35-7 (paper). Edited by Sean Donnelly and Leland M. Hawes, Jr. With an afterword by Welford D. Taylor and cover illustration (“Wall's House”) by J. J. Lankes.

W. Paul Cook (1880-1948) had a career of nearly fifty years in the amateur journalism hobby, where he was best known for distinguished journals like *Monadnock Monthly*, *The Vagrant*, *The Recluse*, and *The Ghost*. He served N.A.P.A. as official editor in 1918-19, producing a mammoth volume of *NA*, and

followed with a term as president in 1919-20. Cook was not a frequent attendant at amateur journalists' conventions but you can find him in the front row in the group photograph taken at N.A.P.A.'s 1933 convention in Boston and reproduced in Spencer's *History*.

If Cook's greatest contribution to the amateur journalism hobby was as printer and editor, nevertheless he was a writer in his own right, most frequently under the pen name “Willis T. Crossman.” Cook had spent most of his married life (1912-30) in Athol MA where he worked for the Athol *Transcript*. It was during this period that he became the friend of fellow amateur H. P. Lovecraft (1890-1937)—the two were both readers and collectors of supernatural literature—and founded The Recluse Press, which printed volumes by Lovecraft, Samuel Loveman, Donald Wandrei, Frank Belknap Long, and others which are today sought-after collector's items. The death of Cook's beloved wife in 1930 sent him into a downward spiral which only ended when he became affiliated with Walter J. Coates's Driftwind Press in the late thirties. After Coates's death in 1941, Cook managed the press for his widow. Driftwind Press functioned both as a subsidy book publisher and as publisher of the monthly magazine *Driftwind*. It was during this final decade of association with Driftwind Press (1938-48) that Cook finally found time to put some of his own work into print—primarily in the two collections *Told In Vermont* (1938) and *Heard In Vermont* (1939; but not bound and distributed until 1947). In addition to these two collections, Cook also issued about fifteen brochures of other works by Willis T. Crossman, mostly in editions of 25 to 50 copies, in an amazing variety of sizes and styles. (He worked mostly with scrap paper for these personal projects.) Frances Norton—of whom this reader would certainly like to learn more—provided linoleum cuts to illustrate a number of these projects, and the editors reproduce the title page of *Lazy* which contains one of them. *The Ghost* was the other major hobby project of Cook's final years at Driftwind Press, while the monthly production of *Driftwind* itself occupied the major part of his work. Significantly, the last issue of *Driftwind* was dated January 1948, the same month that Cook died on the twenty-second.

Editors Donnelly and Hawes have selected eighteen of the best stories from *Told In Vermont*, twenty-eight from *Heard In Vermont*, three from *Driftwind* and five from Cook's miscellaneous printed brochures for this volume. What they have provided to the reader is a representative selection of the best of Cook's work. While Cook's short works are printed as poems, the editors explain (p. xvii) that they aren't

really poetry in the narrow sense: “The Crossman stories don't even look like stories at first glance. With their short broken lines and stanza arrangements they appear to be verse. But they are really prose pieces set in creative typography. Cook's innovation had a practical purpose: to make brief texts more substantial on the printed page. Another, more subtle, purpose is to provide visual clues for reading the stories, like what to emphasize, or where to pause. They suggest unobtrusively how to read them.”

In his afterword describing common themes in the work of Cook and J. J. Lankes, I think that Welford D. Taylor describes well some of the central themes of Cook's works (pp. 159-160): “Both [Cook and Lankes] were fascinated by the raw New England culture—names echoing the Old Testament, the austere independence of spirit, the colorful if plain speech patterns, the wry humor showing through the surface resolve. Both were wise enough to let native ethos speak for itself, which may explain why W. Paul Cook stepped aside in favor of the unobtrusive yet ever observant Crossman.”

By all accounts, Cook was a shy, retiring man in his personal life, but he was surely a keen observer of human nature, especially as evinced in the New Englander. Both the names of his characters and the titles he has chosen for his stories are simply glorious. In “Fiction,” for example we encounter farmer Salem Swett, whose cows are rumored to have legs shorter on one side than the other better to enable them to negotiate Swett's hilly farm, well gone-over by treasure-hunters in days of yore. (Certainly, Cook was well-aware of New England treasure-hunting lore, an early preoccupation of LDS church founder and prophet Joseph Smith.) How did “Fiction” get its title? It's all explained in the last few lines:

A young man drove up
Who was selling
(Or trying to sell)
A book entitled “Farming for Profit.”
Salem was impatient,
Even rude, about it.
“I ain't got no time,” said he,
“To read any fiction whatever.”
Asked where he acquired his amazing fund of
information, Jephtha Jenks replies in “Lazy”:
“Oh,” said Jephtha,
“I didn't attain it.
I just heard it here and there
And was too lazy
To forget it.”

As for naming, how can you beat Panacea Paine, who assists Dr. Herophilus Gregg in the care of the ailing Warbeck Whittle the Elder in “Surprise.” Parsons

especially come in for their share of Cook's good-natured kidding. In “Absent-Minded,” Rev. Allworthy Ashley delivers a prayer intended for prison inmates to the august state legislators assembled in Montpelier. Allworthy also appears in “Forerunner,” where upon appointment as chaplain of the state prison in Windsor, he delivers a farewell sermon taking his text from the gospel of St. John:

“I go to prepare a place for you...
That where I am,
There ye may be also.”

Cook's New England names are so fascinating that I wish the editors had provided an index of names occurring in the stories. They make good reading just by themselves.

Sean Donnelly and his colleagues at University of Tampa Press have done an immaculate job of producing this print-on-demand volume. Print-on-demand technology has advanced to the point where there really can be no prejudice against this method of publication—of which one remarkable aspect is that a book can remain in print “forever” and never fall victim to remainder broker or pulp mill. In addition to J. J. Lankes's fine woodcut “Wall's House,” the editors have made a judicious selection of additional illustrations for the present volume. Cook's typography and design have a piquancy all their own. In his afterword, Welford D. Taylor cites Marvin H. Need of Backwoods Press as a fellow-traveller of Cook as printer craftsman, and for myself I would cite poet, amateur journalist and printer James Larkin Pearson (1879-1981) of North Carolina as another example. Pearson was surely as keen an observer of his fellow Carolinians as Cook was of his fellow New Englanders. Perhaps print-on-demand and digital-imaging technology will eventually facilitate wider availability of Cook's unique works in facsimile. Donnelly and Hawes have whetted our appetite with the present selection of the best of Cook's work. That they resisted the temptation to produce a massive volume of “everything” from Cook's pen is I think all to their credit. The present very manageable volume will do far more to bring Cook's work the attention which it deserves than would a massive archival volume which would perforce have reached very few readers.

Willis T. Crossman's Vermont can be ordered from The University of Tampa Press, 401 West Kennedy Blvd., Tampa, FL 33606 or on-line at <http://utpress.ut.edu>. However, much the best way for an amateur journalist (Fossil or otherwise) to obtain a copy is to send a check payable to co-editor Sean Donnelly, 9037 Tree Valley Circle, Tampa, FL 33615. The price, inclusive of postage, is \$10 for the

papercover and \$20 for the hardcover edition, representing in each case a \$4 discount from the corresponding retail price. The co-editors were kind enough to inscribe a copy for me. They wrote:

For Ken—
We hope Paul Cook
wouldn't mind all
the fuss and attention...
Your friends,
Sean Donnelly
Lee Hawes

After reading *Willis T. Crossman's Vermont*, I feel that Cook's own wishes are no longer relevant. He rests now in peace after a difficult life marked both by achievement and by struggle. His privately-printed books and brochures will sell for high prices whatever his own wishes may have been. (His "curse" did hold for my 1990 reprint of *The Recluse* (1927), which turned out so poorly that I had to give it away.) Donnelly and Hawes have collected the best of Cook's literary work, and now it belongs to posterity. I hope this volume will not be the last we hear from W. Paul Cook.

DINING WITH THE FOSSILS

Ken Faig, Jr.

The Fossils continue to perpetuate the fraternal aspects of their organization by gathering at table for their annual luncheons. What are now luncheons began as dinners held in association with the annual meetings of The Fossils. From the beginning, these meetings were held in New York City. After the incorporation of The Fossils in 1927, it became a legal requirement to hold an annual meeting in New York. This requirement was carefully adhered to until 1985, when The Fossils were re-incorporated in Oregon. Since that time, the annual meetings (and luncheons) of The Fossils have been held in conjunction with the conventions of the various active amateur press associations. With our by-law revisions of several years ago, all business is now conducted by mail and business meetings are no longer held. But we have carefully maintained the tradition of gathering together at table in good fellowship. The era of printed menu cards (often autographed as souvenirs for absent members) has long vanished, but the presentation of our various awards and of our Bradofsky memorial door prize continues. Hopefully, the final Fossils' luncheon is still far in the future. The primary concern of The Fossils has of course always been the amateur journalism hobby. However, it cannot be denied that The Fossils have enjoyed dining together. I thought

present-day Fossils might enjoy a gastronomical tour of our organization's past.

The Fossil for December 1905 records President Charles C. Heuman's decree that the second Friday in April be the date for The Fossils' annual reunion. This decision was reached at a dinner attended by thirteen members at the New York Press Club on October 7, 1905. It is the first time I find a tour de cuisine recorded in our journal:

Oysters on the Shell
Soup
Olives, Salted Nuts
Planked Sea Bass
Squab en Casserole
Salad of the Season
Tutti-Frutti Jellies
Roquefort, Toasted Crackers
Coffee, Rodena Cigars

The Fossils gathered for their third annual reunion at the Republican Club on April 28, 1906. The report provided by Dr. E. B. Swift in *The Fossil* for June 1906 recorded the menu enjoyed by the attendants:

Blue Points
Celery, Salted Almonds, Olives
Essence of Capon, Imperial
Filet of Sea Bass Saute, Meuniere
Cucumbers, Parisienne Potatoes
Noisette of Spring Lamb, New Orleans
Petit Pois, Sabot Potatoes
Punch Bastian
Boned Truffled Squab Chicken, Perigorde
New Asparagus, Vinaigrette
Parfait au Fraise
Petit Fours
Camembert, Roquefort
Coffee

Two years later, on April 25, 1908, the reunion dinner was once again held at the Republican Club. Will L. Clemens' minutes as printed in *The Fossil* for September 1908 end as follows: "That is about all. Yet I have forgotten to mention that the Bunch got away with about four truckloads of Blue Points, Celery, Salted Almonds, Olives, Consomme Printanier Royal, Planked Roe Shad, Parisienne Pommes Noisette, Beef Tenderloin Larded Montpensier, New Rissolee Potatoes, Boned Truffled Squab, Sauce Bastien, Lettuce and Tomato Salad, Baked Alaska, Petit Fours, Roquefort, Crackers, and Cafe Noire, etc., etc., etc."

If clubs and hotels were the predominant sites for the annual meeting and banquet, the favorite dining place of The Fossils in New York City during the first twenty years of the existence of the organization was

surely Pontin's Restaurant, originally located at 46 Franklin Street, just a stone's throw from the infamous Tombs Prison and its "Bridge of Sighs." The building housing the original Pontin's was demolished in 1913 to make way for an office building, and the restaurant moved across the street to 47 Franklin Street. Photographs of the exterior and interior of the original Pontin's at 46 Franklin Street appeared in *The Fossil* for July 1913. Signor L. P. Faccini was the "genial host" for many of the early Fossil dinners at Pontin's. A framed photograph of the first five Fossil presidents decorated the narrow entryway of the original Pontin's. For many years, The Fossils celebrated the March birthday of John F. Walsh, one of their founding members, at Pontin's, in conjunction with the celebration of St. Patrick's Day. They met there on March 17, 1909, to celebrate John Walsh's birthday. Then on April 14, 1909, the Connecticut contingent of The Fossils hosted a dinner in honor of their New York colleagues at Pontin's. The menu cards, as recorded in *The Fossil* for April 1909, offered testimony not only to the excellence of the cuisine but also to the literary bent of the members:

"He that hath a Hobby
never groweth old."

Wall Street Celery (for the nerves)
Fossil Spring Lamb a la "Favorite"
Bridgeport Olives (not as green as they look),
Graff Grissini
Stamford String Beans, Star Brand
Meriden Radishes (1847)
Pen and Press Spaghetti
Double Pica Soup a la Diablo
Young America Squab on Toast
Connecticut River Shad with Roe
M. A. J. C. Salad
Pommes de Walsh, Parisienne
Fossil Future Cigars
"For it's always Fair Weather
When good fellows get together,
With a stein on the table
And a good song ringing clear!"

The names of the various dishes undoubtedly refer to the publications of some of the Connecticut Fossil hosts. As for "good fellows" getting together, it was not until 1931 that qualified lady amateurs were invited to join The Fossils. The annual meetings and banquets seem to have been single-sex events until the 1930s when spouses and lady amateurs began to join the "Old Boys" at table. (The Fossils were almost named "The Old Boys"—but the motion to adopt this name was "laid on the table" at the organizational meeting on May 28, 1904.) The annual meeting in 1909 duly ensued at the Republican Club on May 8,

1909. *The Fossil* for June 1909 recorded the menu as follows:

Oysters Half Shell
Celery, Olives, Salt Almonds
Mousselin of New Asparagus Pastrana
Planked North River Shad
Parisienne Potatoes
Saddle of Lamb, New String Beans
Bermuda Risolee
Boned Stuffed Spring Chicken
Lettuce and Tomato Salad
Strawberry Parfait
Roquefort Cheese, Crackers
Demi Tasse

The New York City Fossils and their guests truly enjoyed a bountiful spring of feasting in that year of 1909!

On May 7, 1910, The Fossils returned once again to the Republican Club for their annual reunion and banquet and *The Fossil* for July 1910 recorded the menu:

Oysters on Half Shell
Celery, Salted Almonds, Olives
Mousseline of New Asparagus Pastranas
Planked Shad Gourmet
Parisienne Potatoes
Saddle of Lamb Risticor
New String Beans, Bermuda Risollee
Boned Stuffed Spring Chicken Cresson
Lettuce and Tomato Salad
Strawberry Parfait
Roquefort, Demi-Tasse, Crackers

I don't know whether the early Fossil annual meeting menus reflected the preferences of the New York Republicans or not, but The Fossils certainly preferred almonds (salted please!) with their celery and olives, liked their fish planked, and their asparagus "mousselined." They generally seem to have made do with three main courses. A typical banquet might commence at 7 p.m. and last until the wee hours (with an ordinary dinner at Pontin's running a bit earlier, perhaps from 6 p.m. to midnight). I generally do not find the libations available with the cuisine mentioned in *The Fossil*, but doubtless appropriate wines accompanied the dinner courses, and suitable alcoholic refreshment the later toasts and reminiscences.

The Fossils were busy again at table in 1911. On February 23, they hosted a dinner in honor of Henry E. Legler at Pontin's. Some weeks later, Fossil Joe Salabes hosted a dinner for Fossils in Baltimore, and *The Fossil* for April 1911 recorded the menu:

Horn Harbors
Celery, Olives, Almonds
Consomme Printaniere Royal

Terrapin Belvedere
 Chafing Dish
 Tenderloin of Beef Pique Financiere
 Peas in Case
 Mallard Duck Guava
 Hominy Chafing Dish
 Romaine and Grape Fruit
 Form of cream, Petit Fours
 Demi Tasse

The annual meeting ensued at the Hotel Savoy in New York on May 6, 1911. *The Fossil* for July 1911 recorded the reunion menu:

Some hae meat, and canna eat,
 And some wad eat that want it;
 But we hae meat and we can eat,
 And sae the Lord be thanket.
 Long Branch Clams
 Olives, Radishes, Salted Almonds, Celery
 Chicken Gumbo a la Fowle
 Filet of Sole, Sauce Bryan
 Cucumbers a la Martin
 Potatoes Humpty Dumpty
 Rack of Lamb a la Yelfraf
 Stuffed Green Peppers a l'Imp
 Potatoes a la Walsh
 Asparagus, Sauce Oliver Optic
 Sorbet Libbie Adams
 Roast Stuffed Squab Chicken a la Kempner
 Salade Salabes
 Plombiere Glacee Aux Fruits a la Will Snow
 Petits Fours, Cafe Noir, Fruits
 Crackers and Cheese
 Pall Mall and La Marquise Cigarettes

The preparations of the various dishes commemorated various Fossils.

The menu for a Boston reunion of The Fossils held at the Boston Art Club on October 28, 1911 was recorded in *The Fossil* for December 1911:

MENU
 Bluepoints, Salabes Dressing
 POTAGE
 Philadelphia Pepper Pot with Briggsy
 Radishes, Olives, Salted Nuts
 POISSON
 Brook Trout, Meuniere, au Martin
 ENTREE
 Filet Mignon, Fresh Mushrooms, nee
 Heuman
 Haricot Verts, Pommes Parisienne
 ROAST
 Chicken a la Fowle
 Tomato Salad
 DESERT
 Cafe Parfait with Weinberg

Assorted Cake
 Camembert Cheese, Seitz
 Toasted Crackers, Jefferds
 Demi Tasse, Kempner

The menu for the ninth annual reunion of The Fossils held at the Hotel Martinique in New York on April 20, 1912 was recorded in *The Fossil* for July 1912:

Blue Point Oysters
 Cream St. Germain
 Olives, Celery
 Filet of Bass au Vin Blanc
 Potatoes Hollandaise
 Lamb Chops, Jardiniere
 Roast Squab, sur Canape
 Lettuce Salad
 Ice Cream in Fancy Forms
 Assorted Cakes
 Coffee

The Hotel Martinique was once again the site for the tenth annual reunion of The Fossils on April 26, 1913. *The Fossil* for July 1913 recorded the menu:

Oyster Cocktail
 Celery, Radishes
 Cream of Peas St. Germain
 Filet of Sole, Montgolfier
 Pommes Persillade
 Stuffed Lamp Chops, Mexicaine
 Red Peppers, Potatoes Duchesse
 Roast Spring Chicken au Cresson
 Lettuce and Tomato Salad
 Biscuit Tortoni, Assorted Cakes
 Coffee, Cigars

Not to be outdone by Baltimore and Boston, the Philadelphia Fossils hosted a second reunion on November 15, 1913 at the Hotel Walton. *The Fossil* for March 1914 recorded the menu:

Cambridge Coves
 Celery, Olives, Radishes
 Puree Mongole Walton
 Blue Fish au Gratin Italienne
 Potatoes Duchesse
 Sweetbread Patties Bechemel
 Green Peas
 Sorbet Imperial
 Roast Philadelphia Squab Chicken Farcie
 Rissolees Potatoes
 Chiffonade Salad
 Ices in Fancy Forms, Assorted Cakes
 Coffee

The same issue of *The Fossil* recorded the menu for John F. Walsh's fiftieth birthday dinner, held at Pontin's on March 17, 1914:

Fossil Cocktails

Salted Almonds, Celery, Olives, Radishes
Grape Fruit with Maraschino Cherries
Mongole Soup
Haut Sauterne

Southern Shad and Roe, Maitre d'hotel
Bermuda Duchesse Potatoes

Chianti

Filet Mignon, Bearnaise
Fresh Mushrooms

New Green Peas, New Asparagus Hollandaise
Roman Punch
Sparkling Moselle

Broiled Breast of Philadelphia Milk-fed Spring

Chicken au Cresson

Heart of Lettuce with Tomato

French Dressing

Biscuit Tortoni, Petits Fours

Cafe Noir

Cigars, Cigarettes

The anonymous account of the 1914 Walsh birthday dinner recorded: "Pontin's artist chef had done his very best; every morsel served was delicious and the appreciative diners did full justice to his excellent preparations." The Walsh fiftieth birthday menu card is distinctive for its inclusion of the wines served with each course.

On April 25, 1914, The Fossils returned to the Republican Club for their eleventh annual reunion. *The Fossil* for June 1914 recorded the banquet menu:

Grape Fruit

Celery, Olives

Mousseline of New Asparagus

Planked Individual Shad Parisienne

Cucumber Baskets

Pommes Parisienne

Fresh Mushrooms Sous Cloche

Eugenie Kirsch Punch

Rack and Saddle of Easter Lamb: Menthe

New Peas, Pommes Risssoles

Endive Salad

Roquefort Dressing

Ice Cream

Assorted Cakes

Camembert, Coffee, Roquefort

Cigars, Cigarettes

A year later, the Hotel McAlpin played host to the twelfth annual Fossil reunion on April 24, 1915. *The Fossil* for August 1915 printed the menu:

Meli-Melo McAlpin

Celery, Salted Nuts, Olives

Potage Mongole

Aiguillette of Bass Bonne Femme

Noisette of Lamb Masenet

Asparagus Tips

Potatoes Parisienne

Roast Philadelphia Chicken

Salade Moderne

Souffle Glace Palmyr

Petits Fours

Coffee

Cigars, Cigarettes

Meli-Melo McAlpin sounds like an intriguing dish but it seems to me unlikely that we will discover much about it at this remove in time. Potage mongole keeps recurring in the banquet menus from this era and I wish I knew what it was. My best guess is a spicy soup typical of Mongolian cookery. The same year, The Fossils held a dinner at Pontin's for visiting Western brothers, in honor of the late Gustave Weinberg, on October 19, 1915. *The Fossil* for December 1915 recorded the menu:

Cotuits

Cream of Fresh Mushrooms

Celery, Olives, Radishes

Filet of Flounder Sauce Tartare

Breast of Chicken, Virginia Ham

Peas, Potatoes au Gratin

Salad in Season

Fancy Ice Cream, Cakes

Cigars, Coffee

Not to be outdone, the Philadelphia Fossils foregathered at the Continental Hotel on November 13, 1915 to enjoy a feast whose menu card was adorned with literary citations:

"But hark! The chiming clocks to dinner call."

—Pope

Celery, Olives

"Some tasty things to whet our appetites."

Blue Points Cocktail

"Behold these oysters! A natural food for man."

Puree of Split Peas Au Crouton

"Soup! Much better in us than we in it."

Broiled Bluefish Maitre d'Hotel

"From the rude sea's enraged and foaming mouth."

—*Twelfth Night*

Julienne Potatoes

"Comparisons are odious."

Sweetbread Cutlet and Peas

"A dish fit for the gods."

—*Julius Caesar*

"Green you are, and fresh."

—*King John*

Roast Chicken, Giblet Sauce

"Even for our kitchens we kill the fowl of the season."

—*Measure for Measure*

Sweet Potatoes Glace, Parisienne Potatoes

"Thou com'st in such a questionable shape."

—*Hamlet*

“Let the sky rain potatoes.”

—*Merry Wives of Windsor*

Combination Salad

“A curious combination.”

Fancy Ice Cream, Cakes

“Forsooth it has a pleasant taste to mine palate.”

“Then farewell heat, and welcome frost.”

—*Merchant of Venice*

Coffee

“Coffee, which makes the politician wise.”

—Pope

Cigars and Cigarettes

“Tis better to smoke here than hereafter.”

—Anon.

Stanton S. Mills reported on his experiences as “A Tenderfoot at Pontin’s” in *The Fossil* for April 1916. He described the banquet hall in the new Pontin’s as follows: “The walls of the banquet hall at Pontin’s are adorned with relics, pictures and paintings of nearly every high-brow member of the New York contingent of Fossilism. The life-size painting of J. A. Fynes looks like the actor, John T. Raymond, as he appeared forty years ago in the character of Col. Mulberry Sellers. Then there is a bust charcoal sketch of C. Fred: Crosby that looks as much like Falstaff as it does Crosby. An India ink etching of Joseph Dana Miller reminds one of William J. Florence when that fine actor was playing the part of Hon. Bardwell Slote. The large photogravure of Joseph Salabes is an exact counterpart of Nat Goodwin when he was one of the hind legs of the heifer in E. E. Rice’s spectacle, “Evangeline.” The 9 ft. 4 in. by 18 ft. 6 in. Syrian rug on the marble floor facing the imperial shrine has woven in the center an artistic bas relief bust of “Heuman I,” the patron saint of the Noble Order of Royal Fossils. A handsome pennant with a face that I took to be Napoleon’s, worked in silk in the center, proved to be the face of Louis Kempner. A profile of Clarence G. Allen looks more like Boss Tweed or Gen. Grant.” The same issue of *The Fossil* reported on the menu for another dinner held at Pontin’s on January 18, 1916:

Ostreae Univalvae

Poisson

Pisces Umbra Smeltzphyrda

Entree

Chopa di Lama, Sfaghetti Italian

Roti

Chicken Amateura, Spuds a la Murphy

Wines and Cordials

Chianti Barone Ricasoli

Fychtue Croton-Wasser

Salade

Cold Ice Cream

Cafe Tartarusque Cigaros

I’ve been away from my four years of high school Latin for nearly forty years now, but something still tells me that last line should read:

Cafe Tartarus Cigarosque

In fact, I don’t think either coffee or tobacco (cigars or otherwise) were used by the ancient Romans. I am not sure that the attempted Latinization of their names is very successful; perhaps no more than “pidgin” Latin was intended. My *Lexicon Recentis Latinitatis* gives “cafearia potio” for coffee, and “bacillum nicotianum” for cigar. So (not to one-up The Fossils) here is my rendering of the last line for the January 18, 1916 dinner menu at Pontin’s:

Cafearia Nigra Bacillaque Nicotiana

The Fossils held their thirteenth reunion at the Hotel McAlpin on April 29, 1916 and the menu card (with its literary embellishments) was reported in *The Fossil* for August 1916:

“A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh the heart merry.”—*Ecclesiastes X,9*

Cape Cod Oysters

“A most delicate monster.”

—*The Tempest*

Cream of Chicken, Le Doyen

“Compounded of many samples, extracted from many objects.”—*As You Like It*

Celery, Salted Nuts, Olives

“I do perceive here a divided duty.”

—*Othello*

Aiguillette of Bass, Dorio

“That sort was well fished for.”

—*The Tempest*

Tenderloin of Beef, Madeira Sauce

Macedoine of Fresh Vegetables

Potatoes Chateau

“This dish of meat is too good for any but anglers, or very honest men.”—*The Compleat Angler*

Guinea Hen a la Broche

Salad Moderne

“What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild fowl?”—*Twelfth Night*

Bombe Tugella

Cakes

“A wilderness of sweets.”—*Paradise Lost*

Coffee

Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.”

—*Book of Common Prayer*

A quick glance at the guest list does not reveal the name of Truman Joseph Spencer; but his known love of Shakespeare and his involvement with printing menu cards for Fossil banquets certainly leads one to speculate that he may have been involved with the creation of this menu. I learn from *Larousse*

Gastronomique that a macedoine is a fancy preparation of chopped vegetables.

How much did it all cost? The same issue of *The Fossil* reports that the annual reunion had receipts of \$270.00 and disbursements of \$258.65, for a net profit of \$11.35. Since the attendance at the April 29, 1916 reunion was 54 persons, the charge was \$5.00 per cover, a significant sum in those days.

In April 1917 The Fossils once again assembled at the Hotel McAlpin for their annual reunion. Charles H. Fowle reported on the menu in *The Fossil* for September 1917 as follows:

MENU

America Expects Every Fossil To Do His Duty!

Cape Cods

Mock Turtle a l'Americaine

Celery, Salted Nuts, Olives

Filet of Sole Mornay

Larded Loin of Beef, Jardiniere

Fresh Vegetables, Potatoes Noisette

Roast Philadelphia Chicken

Salade Variee

Bombe Royale, Petits Four, Coffee

Cigars, Cigarettes

“Where proud pied April, dress'd in all his train,

Hath put a spirit of youth in everything.”

For their fifteenth annual reunion on April 27, 1918, The Fossils returned to their “old trysting place,” Pontin's. The menu was reported in *The Fossil* for July 1918:

Fossils' Cocktail

Hors d'Oeuvres

Olives, Anchovies, Celery, Relishes

Puree of Mongole

Filet of Sea Bass Normandie

Pommes Duchesse

Spaghetti Italienne

Broiled Spring Chicken

Salad in Season

Neapolitan Ice Cream

Demi-tasse

The mention of Fossils' Cocktail recalls the generosity of Louis C. Wills, who for many years stood the bar tab for a round of cocktails at Fossils' luncheons. Whether there was any special recipe for Fossils' Cocktail as served at Pontin's awaits further research in the files of *The Fossil*. Perhaps Signor Faccini took the secret of this concoction with him to the grave. The same issue of *The Fossil* reported on a deficit resulting from the 1918 reunion dinner: receipts, \$153.00; disbursements, printing invitations, envelopes and songs, \$22.50, piano, \$5.00, telegrams, \$0.75, postage \$4.80, Pontin's bill, \$152.16, total, \$185.25; deficit, \$32.20.

The sixteenth annual reunion was held at New York's historic Fraunces Tavern in April 1919. Will T. Scofield reported on the menu in *The Fossil* for December 1919:

Celery and Olives

Blue Points on the Half Shell

Puree Mongole

Planked Shad, Delaware

Sorbet au Kirsch

Roast Philadelphia Chicken

Green Peas, Potatoes Parisienne

Lettuce Salad, French Dressing

Ice Cream, Cakes, Cheese

Demi-Tasse

Cigars, Cigarettes

Not to be outdone, the Philadelphia Fossils hosted a reunion dinner on February 14, 1920, at the Poor Richard's Club. Will R. Murphy and George B. King reported on the menu in *The Fossil* for April 1920:

Governor Grape Fruit a la Harrisburg

Ladies' Home Consomme

Sproul Roast Chicken

Young America Sweet Potatoes

The Sun Peas

Saturday Evening Post Salad

Fossilized Ice Cream

N.A.P.A. Fancy Cakes

18th Amendment Cocktail

Cigars, Cigarettes

(Since Prohibition had entered into effect on January 16, 1920, approximately one month before the dinner at the Poor Richard's Club, the “18th Amendment Cocktail” was doubtless a non-alcoholic beverage in compliance with the new law.) Murphy and King reported: “Although the Governor [William C. Sproul of Pennsylvania] was at Harrisburg, the grape fruit was on hand, and Mr. Curtis's [Fossil Cyrus H. K. Curtis] enforced presence at his country place on York Road meant no abstention of the ladies' home consomme.”

The Fossils' seventeenth reunion was held at Fraunces Tavern in New York on May 1, 1920, and the menu was reproduced in facsimile (albeit reduced size) in *The Fossil* for November 1920. Here is my attempted rendition of the food items (with the aid of a magnifying glass):

Celery and Olives

Blue Points on Half Shell

Mongel Puree

Planked Shad

Roast Philadelphia Chicken

Potatoes, Peas

Lettuce, Russian Dressing

Ice Cream, Demi Tasse

Cigars, Cigarettes

The annual birthday dinner for John F. Walsh held at Pontin's on March 17, 1921, was reported by Edwin B. Swift in *The Fossil* for April 1921. The menu included:

Relishes Varies
 Blue Points on Half Shell
 Celery, Olives, Radishes
 Strained Chicken Gumbo En Tasse
 Cold Chicken, Lobster Mayonnaise
 Spagetti a la Pontin
 Roast Philadelphia Capon au Cresson
 Salade en Saison
 Italian Spuniour
 Assorted Petits Fours
 Cafe Noir

I must admit to having no idea of what Italian Spuniour may be, but I hope that the Fossils in attendance enjoyed it.

The eighteenth reunion banquet took place at the Commodore Hotel in New York on April 30, 1921. Leonard E. Tilden reported on the menu in *The Fossil* for November 1921:

Blue Points Half Shell
 Puree Mongole
 Celery, Olives
 Planked Shad
 Potatoes Duchesse
 Roast Philadelphia Chicken
 Peas au Beurre
 Lettuce Salad Russian Dressing
 Vanilla Ice Cream
 Cheese and Crackers
 Cafe Noir
 Cigarettes, Cigars

The Fossils returned to Pontin's for their reunion banquet on April 29, 1922. The menu as reported by Edwin B. Swift in *The Fossil* for November 1922 included:

Blue Points
 Olives, Radishes, Celery
 Beet Salad with Horse Radish
 Consomme
 Shad with Roe
 Potatoes Rissoles
 Spaghetti au Gratin
 Chicken Livers
 Philadelphia Capon
 Combination Salad
 Roast Tenderloin of Beef
 Mushrooms, French Peas
 Ice Cream, Demi Tasse
 Cigars

It is interesting to note that these early Fossil banquets follow the European format of eating salad late in the

meal. The same issue of *The Fossil* reported that a number of New York Fossils had commenced dining together at Pontin's on a weekly basis on Tuesday nights. These meetings continued for years, but unless out-of-town guests were present no accounts were generally printed. Perhaps the Fossils even ordered from Signor Faccini's regular menu for these Tuesday night dinners.

When Barnard G. Parker joined the New York Fossils for dinner at Pontin's in January 1923, the occasion merited printing the menu in *The Fossil* for April 1923:

Pontin's Appetizers
 Minestrome
 Pork Tenderloins
 Mushrooms, Cranberry Sauce
 Spaghetti au Gratin
 Roast Guinea Hen
 Potatoes Rissoles, French Peas
 Ice Cream, Petit Fours
 Camembert
 Bent's Crackers, Demi Tasse
 Cigars

We don't often encounter brand names in Fossil menus, but Bent's Crackers seems to be an exception.

The Fossil for August 1923 reported on the twentieth annual reunion dinner (the 1904 organizational meeting counting as reunion dinner number one) held at the Hotel McAlpin on April 28, 1923. The menu served included:

Grape Fruit
 Consomme Sarah Bernhardt
 Celery, Olives
 Filet of Sole, Mornay
 Roast Philadelphia Capon
 Corn au Paprika
 Potatoes Anna
 Salad Nicoise
 Fresh Strawberry Mousse
 Petits Fours
 Coffee
 Cigars, Cigarettes

The same issue of *The Fossil* provided a breakdown of the receipts and disbursements related to the annual dinner: receipts, 52 persons at \$5.00 each, \$260.00, special contributions from Charles R. Sherlock, \$21.80, total, \$281.80; disbursements, paid to Hotel McAlpin, \$193.50, head waiter, \$15.00, floral decorations, \$20.00, printing menus, \$15.00, cigars and cigarettes, \$21.80, entertainment, arranged by Fynes and Miller, \$45.00, total disbursements, \$310.30; deficit, \$28.50. F. W. Koch reported on the banquet in *The Fossil* in these terms: "The dinner was served deftly, and was toothsome but innocuous. That

is a good descriptive word, involuntarily suggested by the Beverage of the evening, served unstintedly from carafes, with cold ice on the side; it goes well for the meal also, which on the whole would hardly have prompted James M. Beck to summon the manager, as he did three years ago at Fraunces Tavern, to assure him that with his wide experience as a dinner guest he had never enjoyed a more perfect meal.” If reporter F. W. Koch was disappointed by the food, he found the setting more impressive: “The Blue Room of the Hotel McAlpin, the scene of this event, is located on the mezzanine floor, a lofty chamber of about 40 by 50 feet in size, L shape, lavishly decorated in the Moorish or Alhambra style. The table was in the form of a T. The decorations consisted of ferns spread zig-zag on the cloth, dotted with many-hued sweet-pea blossoms, and a number of large vases filled with bouquets of the same dainty flowers.” Koch's report provides one of the most extensive descriptions of a Fossil banquet, including even a diagram of the banquet table (a feature of many convention reports in nineteenth-century amateur magazines). As for the entertainment, Miss Rose Solomon, age 14, played the piano before dinner, and Elizabeth Hester Ward (whose portrait was reproduced in *The Fossil*) presented a program of old-fashioned songs including “The Last Rose of Summer” and “Home, Sweet Home.” This banquet took place during Prohibition, so the toasts (at least all the official ones) were in “good old ice water.” (The Eighteenth Amendment had been declared ratified on January 29, 1919, and entered into force on January 16, 1920. Prohibition was repealed by the Twenty-First Amendment which was declared ratified on December 21, 1933.) It's interesting to note that The Fossils paid for their own cigars and cigarettes and floral decorations. The head waiter, on behalf of the serving staff, received considerably less than would be added as service charge for a hotel banquet at the present time.

The Fossils celebrated their twenty-first reunion at the Hotel Commodore in New York on April 26, 1924. Frank L. Seaver's report in *The Fossil* for September 1924 reported the menu thus:

Hors d'Oeuvres Varies
 Petite Marmite
 Celery, Salted Nuts, Olives
 Brook Trout Saute Doria
 Cucumbers
 Potato Olivette
 Mignonette of Guinea Chicken Judic
 Braised Endive
 Baron of Baby Lamb Roti a la Menthe
 Fresh Asparagus Tips Au Beurre
 Salad Margot

Corbeille aux Fraises
 Friandises
 Cafe Noir
 Cigars, Cigarettes

A petite marmite is a clear, savoury broth from peasant cuisine, traditionally served in an earthenware bowl. This dish occurs often in The Fossils' reunion menus from this period.

I did not find any account of the 1925 reunion in *The Fossil*. But Frank L. Seaver once again reported on the twenty-third annual reunion held at the Advertising Club on April 24, 1926. In *The Fossil* for September 1926 he reported the menu thus:

Fruit Cocktail
 Olives, Celery
 Cream of Fresh Mushrooms
 Broiled Sweetbreads
 French Peas
 Filet Mignon Jardiniere
 Cold Asparagus Vinaigrette
 Spumoni Ice Cream
 Coffee
 Cigars, Cigarettes
 White Rock Pale Ginger Ale

Prohibition continued so it is not surprising to find White Rock Pale Ginger Ale as the featured beverage. It's another rare instance of a specific brand name being mentioned on the menu for a Fossil banquet.

A special Fossil meeting took place at the Poor Richard Club in Philadelphia on July 3, 1926 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the National Amateur Press Association. Ten survivors of N.A.P.A.'s original organizing meeting on July 4, 1876 at the City Institute in Philadelphia attended the fiftieth reunion celebration and were photographed outside the Poor Richard Club (q.v., *The Fossil*, September 1926, p. 177). According to the research of Hyman Bradofsky, J. F. Duhamel of Washington DC was ultimately the last survivor of these men. What The Fossils ate for this special celebration is recorded in the same issue of *The Fossil*:

Amateur Fruit Cup
 Olives, Assorted Nuts
 Fish a la City Institute
 N.A.P.A. Salad
 Philadelphia Capon
 Peas, Potatoes
 Semi-Centennial Ice Cream
 Cakes
 Cigarettes, Cigars, White Rock

Carl Figue reported the twenty-fourth annual reunion of The Fossils held at the Hotel Pennsylvania on April 30, 1927 in *The Fossil* for September 1927. The menu was as follows:

Sea Food Cocktail
 Gumbo In Cup
 Celery, Olives
 Crab Flake Florentine
 Potatoes Duchesse
 Mignonette of Sweetbreads
 Montpensier
 String Beans au Gratin
 Breast of Chicken en Casserole
 Salad Moderne
 Mousse Pennsylvania
 Cakes
 Cafe
 Cigars, Cigarettes

Absent Fossil Frank Babcock sent roses via air mail from Berkeley, California. The Tuesday night club presented a handsome ivory gavel to President Leonard E. Tilden.

The Fossils returned to the Hotel Pennsylvania for their twenty-fifth annual reunion on April 28, 1928. The menu as recorded by Sam S. Stinson in his report published in *The Fossil* for September 1928 was as follows:

“Let good digestion wait an appetite.”

Canape Surprise
 Potage Mongole
 Celery, Olives

“Green you are, and fresh.”

—*King John*

Brook Trout Saute Meuniere

“This sort was well fished for—”

—*The Tempest*

Potatoes Parisienne
 Pressed Cucumbers

Roast Philadelphia Capon, Cressoniere

“What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning

wild fowl—”

—*Twelfth Night*

Grilled Sweet Potatoes
 Carrots and Peas

Hearts of Lettuce, Russian Dressing

Fancy Ice Cream—Cakes

Cafe

“Coffee which makes the politician wise.”

—*Alexander Pope*

Cigars and Cigarettes

Some of the literary citations had been pressed into service for earlier menu cards. I don't have any idea of what pressed cucumbers may have been. Potatoes Parisienne were certainly a popular Fossil menu item, with Potatoes Duchesse and Potatoes Risolee following closely in second and third positions.

The Fossils returned to the Hotel

Pennsylvania for their twenty-seventh annual reunion on April 27, 1930. Michael F. Boechat reported on the meeting in *The Fossil* for July 1930. The menu was as follows:

Lobster Cocktail Olympic
 Consomme Julienne
 Celery, Olives
 Lake White Fish Maitre d'Hotel
 Potatoes Croquettes
 Filet Mignon Nature
 Broccoli, Sauce Polonaise
 Salad Etienne
 Bombe Pennsylvania
 Cafe, Cigars, Cigarettes

The stock market drop in October 1929 clearly didn't prevent The Fossils and their guests from having a merry celebration in 1930. Perhaps in an attempt to justify their relative restraint, the menu from the banquet of the 1889 National Amateur Press Association convention in Buffalo, New York was reproduced in the same issue of *The Fossil* (p. 102):

Little Neck Clams

Boiled Salmon

Croquettes of Chicken

Soft Shell Crabs

Filet of Beef

Roast Turkey

Lobster Salad

Neapolitan Ice Cream

I did not find a report of the 1931 reunion in *The Fossil*. The 1932 reunion was held at the Hotel Astor (site of the 1925 reunion) on the last Saturday of April, 1932. Alvin M. Higgins reported the reunion in *The Fossil* for August 1932. The menu was as follows:

Blue Point Oyster Cocktail

Petite Marmite Bourgeoise

Celery, Salted Nuts, Olives

Supreme of Salmon, Renaissance (cold)

Tartar Sauce

Cucumbers and Tomatoes Excelsior

Saddle of Lamb au Romarin

Vegetables Jardiniere

Broiled Boned Spring Chicken, Parmentier

Potatoes Rissolees

Fresh Asparagus Vinaigrette

Pave Glace Vanilla

Crushed Fresh Strawberries

Petits Fours

Moka, Cigars and Cigarettes

Alvin Higgins recorded of the meeting: “It cost us \$5 each, and some of us had been saving that money at 10 cents a week for a year; but it was worth many times that amount to every Fossil there. It was Will Koch's idea to bring us back to the Astor, because the late W.

C. Muschenheim of the Astor was mine host of the Arena, where the first Fossil banquet was held twenty-nine years ago. The Astor outdid itself in giving the Fossils a wonderful time. It was a Lucullan feast, served to us as if we had been emperors. It set us all to dreaming of the galaxy of Fossil dinners that have linked us to the dear days of boy journalism and have kept alive in our hearts the memories of the fine fellowship that cemented the Fossil years of the 70s and 80s with A.D. 1932.” Even in the depths of the Great Depression good fellowship survived. While some Fossils were well-off and could readily afford the \$5 cover charge, it is not difficult to believe that others set aside ten cents per week in order to attend the annual banquet.

Reporting of the annual reunions becomes sparser in the 1930s. Perhaps Fossil editor Truman J. Spencer had more important matters to occupy the pages of *The Fossil*. The great controversy surrounding the transfer of the Fossil Library from 150 Nassau Street (Room 1302 of the Sun Building) in New York City to the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia may have dampened enthusiasm in 1933-35. However, William Cogger reported extensively on the thirty-third annual reunion held at the Hotel Astor on April 25, 1936 in *The Fossil* for August 1936. He recorded the menu as follows:

Coupe of Fruit Fraisettes
 Petite Marmite Dauphinoise
 Celery, Olives
 Broiled Boned Shad, Maitre d'Hotel
 Cucumbers and Tomato
 Broiled Spring Chicken, Parmentier
 Potatoes Risssoles
 Fresh String Beans Saute
 Salad Clementine
 Gateau Glace Milanese
 Petits Fours
 Moka

The Astor remained a popular meeting place for The Fossils for many years and perhaps the quality of the food and the service was an influencing factor. It is interesting to note how moka replaced cafe noir on the menu cards as time progressed.

The Fossils returned to the Hotel Astor for their thirty-fourth annual reunion on April 24, 1937. Vincent B. Haggerty reported on the reunion in *The Fossil* for October 1937. The menu was as follows:

Coupe of Fresh Strawberries Favorite
 Petite Marmite Hochpot, Celery, Olives
 Supreme of Sea Bass Saute Meuniere
 Grapes, Almonds
 Broiled Spring Chicken Maitre d'Hotel
 New Peas a la'Anglaise

Sweet Potato Croquettes
 New Asparagus Vinaigrette
 Bombe Florentine, Petits Fours
 Moka

The thirty-fifth annual reunion of The Fossils was again held at the Hotel Astor, on April 30, 1938, as reported in *The Fossil* for September 1938. The menu cards, donated by Truman J. Spencer, included the following:

Coupe of Fruit Rafrachi
 Petite Marmite Vintmille
 Celery, Olives
 Aiguillette of Gray Sole, Marguery
 Shrimps and Oysters
 Broiled Breast of Chicken, Astor
 Candied Yams
 Fresh Mushrooms
 New Peas
 Salad Mimosa
 Gateau Glace Egyptienne
 Petits Fours
 Moka

The thirty-sixth annual reunion was again held at the Hotel Astor, on April 29, 1939. *The Fossil* for June 1939 reported the menu as follows:

Coupe of Fruit Rafrachi
 Petite Marmite Alsacienne
 Celery, Olives
 Aiguillette of Sea Bass, Francois Ier
 Fresh Mushrooms and Tomatoes
 Broiled Spring Chicken, Parmentier
 Potatoes Risssoles
 New Peas and Carrots
 Salad Mirette
 Pave Glace Nicoise
 Petits Fours
 Moka

(A pave is a fancy decorated mousse prepared in a mold.) The menu cards were printed and donated by Truman J. Spencer. The Fossils must have had favorites among the various cuisine items offered by the Astor chef, since some items occur again and again in the menu cards. They surely loved their petite marmites, their broiled chicken Astor, and their asparagus vinaigrette.

Where was the annual reunion in 1940? If you guessed the Hotel Astor, you were right. It occurred on April 27, 1940, and was attended by forty members and friends. *The Fossil* for June 1940 reported the menu as follows:

Coupe of Fruit Rafrachi
 Petite Marmite Alsacienne
 Celery, Olives
 Aiguillette of Sea Bass Francois Ier

Fresh Mushrooms and Tomatoes
 Broiled Spring Chicken Parmentier
 Potatoes Risssoles
 New Peas and Carrots
 Salad Mirette
 Pave Glace Nicoise
 Petits Fours
 Moka

Thirty-eight Fossils and friends returned to the Hotel Astor for the thirty-eighth annual reunion on April 26, 1941. *The Fossil* for July 1941 recorded the menu as follows:

Coupe of Fruit Carmen
 Petite Marmite Printaniere
 Celery, Olives
 Supreme of Halibut Bonne Femme
 Mushrooms Poulette
 Broiled Spring Chicken Maitre d'Hotel
 Candied Yams
 New Stringbeans Panaches
 Salad Mimosa
 Pave Glace Mignon
 Petits Fours
 Moka

Was it The Astor again in 1942? If you guessed yes, you guessed wrong. The thirty-ninth annual reunion of The Fossils, attended by thirty-nine members and guests, was held at the Advertising Club on April 25, 1942. The menu, as reported in *The Fossil* for June 1942, was as follows:

Fresh Fruit Cup
 Celery, Radishes, Olives
 Cream of Chicken, a la Reine
 Roast Rack and Leg Spring Lamb
 New Peas, Potatoes au Gratin
 Mixed Green Salad
 Ice Cream, Fruit Sauce
 Cake
 Coffee

The menu cards, printed and donated by Truman J. Spencer, bore the following verses by James F. Morton:

Why are we amateurs? 'Tis not for fame.
 Of what we write the world takes little heed.
 'Tis not for pelf our best we freely give
 And pay to print what none will pay to read.

Why are we amateurs? Because we love
 The free expression of the active mind,
 The fancy's play, the interchange of thought,
 The dazzling dreams that will not be confined.

And best of Amateuria's gifts, we greet,

With ever grateful hearts for boon so rare,
 The crown of crowns to make life rich indeed,
 The priceless friendships far beyond compare.

The United States was now at war, but good fellowship persisted at The Fossils' annual reunions despite the challenges of the times.

Forty-four members and guests again gathered at the Advertising Club for the fortieth annual reunion of The Fossils on April 24, 1943. *The Fossil* for June 1943 reported the menu as follows:

Half Grapefruit
 Celery and Olives
 Cream of Asparagus
 Roast Chicken
 Mixed Green Salad
 Potato Duchesse
 Mixed Green Vegetables
 Ice Cream with Chocolate Sauce
 Cakes
 Demi Tasse

Truman J. Spencer was present, and was asked to say grace before the repast.

The Fossils held their forty-first annual reunion, once again at the Advertising Club, on April 29, 1944. *The Fossil* for August 1944 recorded the menu as follows:

Half Grapefruit
 Celery and Olives
 Cream of Asparagus
 Roast Chicken
 Mixed Green Vegetables
 Potato Duchesse
 Mixed Green Salad
 Ice Cream—Chocolate Sauce
 Cakes, Coffee

The blessing was said once again by Truman J. Spencer, present for his final Fossil reunion. He died, only a few weeks later, on July 6, 1944. His collection of amateur journals became the central component of the American Antiquarian Society's magnificent collection. His volume (1934-44) of *The Fossil* remains one of the most memorable ever published. The menus for the 1944 reunion, handsomely printed on blue paper with The Fossil seal in gold, were donated by President Frank Roe Batchelder. Fossil John Moody (1868-1958), who remained active in his financial publishing and rating agency business until the final months of his long life, was present for his first dinner in many years, at the express invitation of President Batchelder.

With the end of the World War, a new generation of leadership assumed command of The Fossils. Edward H. Cole and Edna Hyde McDonald

were dominating figures. The Fossil reunions, while still elegant and memorable occasions, were no longer reported in great detail, at least in their social aspects. I did find the following invitation to the forty-sixth annual reunion reproduced in *The Fossil* for April 1949:

You are cordially invited to attend the
Forty-sixth Annual Reunion
and Luncheon of The Fossils
to be held at the
Hotel Astor
Times Square, New York
Saturday, April 30, 1949, at 1:00 p.m.
Please note that this year it will be luncheon at
1:00 p.m. with the annual meeting to follow
till 5:00 p.m.
\$3.25 a plate. Please make reservation
and send your check to John F. Corell,
Room 3104, 295 Madison Avenue,
New York, N.Y.
The favor will be appreciated if guests will
arrive at 12:30 p.m.

The emphasis placed upon the scheduling may in fact indicate that 1949 was the first year that a luncheon before the business meeting replaced a dinner following the business meeting. While Fossil business is now conducted by mail, the tradition of an annual luncheon, held (since 1985) in conjunction with an amateur journalism convention, persists.

The last banquet menu which I can find reproduced in *The Fossil* occurs in Arnold Kruckman's account of the forty-eighth annual dinner and reunion of The Fossils, which was held at the Hotel Astor, Times Square, New York City, on April 28, 1951. The guests assembled at 5p.m. in the Yacht Room for a reception preceding the dinner. The business meeting followed the dinner. The dinner menu as reproduced in Kruckman's report was:

Supreme of Shrimp
Petite Marmite Croute au Pot
Celery, Olives
Roast Turkey Astor
Rice and Liver Stuffing, Cranberry Sauce
Candied Yams, Brussels Sprouts
Lettuce and Tomato Salad
French Dressing
Bombe Vanille, Fruit Sauce
Petits Fours

I have not searched every subsequent issue of *The Fossil*, and if anyone can find a later banquet menu, I would be gratified if they would let me know where it occurs. It is certainly appropriate that those old Astor favorites Petite Marmite and Bombe Vanille occur in this final banquet menu. (Undoubtedly these

were favorites of The Fossil banquet planners as well!) The menu for the 1951 banquet almost reads like a traditional Thanksgiving feast, although I suppose pumpkin soup would have replaced the Petite Marmite and mince meat pie the Bombe Vanille in a more traditional Thanksgiving menu. But after all it was April, not November. While the luncheon menus of later years have generally not been reproduced in *The Fossil*, certainly among our living membership there are many memories of the last fifty years of luncheons which might be shared. My wife, my son and I had the pleasure of attending the Fossil luncheon held in conjunction with NAPA's convention in Cincinnati, Ohio in July 2002. Our genial hosts Bill and GiGi Volkart had provided a genuine fossil as a souvenir for each guest. At this luncheon, each guest ordered individually from the restaurant menu. The details of the Bradofsky door prize and other awards may doubtless be found in *The Fossil*.

How our predecessors in the hobby loved their good fellowship at the annual reunions! How they loved the good food they were served in abundance! We can see favorite sites and dishes repeat themselves from year to year. From the first meeting at the Arena Hotel on May 28, 1904, the reunions usually lasted into the wee hours of the morning. Enjoying good fellowship at table is far from extinct in the amateur journalism hobby. The National Amateur Press Association, in particular, preserves the tradition of a banquet to close the last full day of proceedings at its annual convention. The majority of the male guests still don coat and tie for the banquet not out of stuffiness but out of love and respect for their hobby and their friends. The menus are less elaborate than the menus of yesteryear. (One wonders how much it would cost to duplicate a feast a la Astor or a la Pontin's today—probably \$100 per plate or more.) Convention programs rather than menu cards are passed among the guests to be signed as souvenirs for absent amateurs. I imagine that some of the same traditions are preserved in the American Amateur Press Association and other associations. As recorded in verse by James F. Morton, we still love to gather with our friends. Partaking of a meal together forms an important part of those gatherings as it has from the start.

This essay surely doesn't seek to trivialize The Fossils or to criticize them for their dining habits. Some readers would undoubtedly contend that the achievements of our members and of our organization deserve more attention than what we ate at our banquets. I do not disagree. Our achievements have been recorded in thousands of pages of *The Fossil* and elsewhere. By way of contrast our reunion banquets

have received little attention. I contend that how we celebrated and what we ate is a non-negligible part of our record. In challenging times it helps to reflect on our common humanity. Our predecessors though dead were surely just as human as we. We take pleasure in remembering them and their deeds (including their banquets) and we hope that future Fossils will remember us in charity as well.

INSTITUTIONAL NEWS

The American Antiquarian Society has posted a partial electronic inventory of its holdings of pre-1901 amateur journals on its website at <http://americanantiquarian.org/Inventories/amateura.htm>. Consulted by the editor on March 16, 2005, the inventory displayed holdings by publication state, publication locality, title, and issues held. The inventory as consulted on March 16 included journals published in Arkansas, Alabama, Arizona, California, Canada, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia and Florida. Work on the electronic inventory is continuing. *The Fossil* thanks Vincent Golden, Curator of Newspapers and Periodicals at the American Antiquarian Society, for this information.

The Special Collections Department of the University of Iowa in Iowa City released issued a press release concerning its acquisition of the Martin M. Horvat collection of science fiction fanzines on February 11, 2005. The release may be found at <http://www.uiowa.edu/~ournews/2005/february/021105zines.html>. About fifteen percent of the full collection of 250,000 items is already available for use and a Collection Guide containing background information and an alphabetical listing of titles may be found at http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/spec-coll/MS/ToMsC800/MsC791/MsC791_horvatfanzines.htm. *The Fossil* thanks Robert Lichtman for this information.

The American Amateur Journalist for March 2005 reports that the AAPA collection was transferred from the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming (its home since 1993) to the International Printing Museum in Carson CA at the end of January 2005. *The Fossil* believes that Mark Barbour and his staff in Carson CA will provide an excellent home for the AAPA collection.

OUR CENTENNIAL VOLUME IS READY

One Hundred Years of The Fossils features articles by such historians as Harry T. Cook, Victor A. Moitoret, Edward H. Cole, and Ken Faig, Jr. The hardbound book was hand-crafted in the publisher's

hobby shop. Price, including shipping, is \$15, ten dollars of which goes to *The Fossil Fund*. For your copy, contact Guy Miller, 2951 Archer Lane, Springfield OH 45503-1209.

TIME TO FILE FOR OFFICE

It's election time again; and we are seeking candidates for the offices of President, Vice President, and Official Editor. Names must be submitted by June 30 to Secretary-Treasurer Stan Oliner, 1278 Dexter Street, Denver CO 80220, e-mail <soliner@yahoo.com>.

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2004-2005

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THE FOSSILS

This journal is the Official Organ of The Fossils, Inc.,

a non-profit organization whose purposes are to stimulate interest in and preserve the history of independent publishing, either separate from or organized in the hobby known as “Amateur Journalism” and to foster the practices of amateur journalism. To this end, The Fossils preserved the Library of Amateur Journalism, a repository of amateur papers and memorabilia dating from the 1850s, acquired in 1916 and donated in 2004 to the Special Collections Department of the University of Wisconsin Library, Room 976, Memorial Library, 728 State Street, Madison, WI 53706. Individuals or institutions allied with our goals are invited to join The Fossils. Dues are \$15 annually—\$20 for joint membership of husband and wife. Annual subscription to *The Fossil* without privileges of membership is \$10. Make remittances payable to The Fossils, Inc., and mail to the Secretary-Treasurer.