THE FOSSIL

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STEPS FORWARD
PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Guy Miller

Election Time is upon us. I refer to our Fossils elections which beginning with this new year 2008 will be starkly different from those of our past. Enclosed with this January issue of *The Fossil* you will find a copy of our newly revised By-Laws. I recommend it to your close study because you will find a number of changes, chief among them being the provision that beginning with this year's election, instead of the traditional slate of officers, you will vote for only three candidates who will serve within the structure of a Board of Trustees for a two-year term. All other officers will be appointed by this Board.

We see this new arrangement–and we hope that the future will support us–as a step forward in streamlining our structure to better enable us to meet the needs of an uncertain future, as well as the problems associated with a dwindling membership.

There is little doubt that our parent groups AAPA and NAPA, sooner than they now guess, will have to substitute many present ingrained practices with more updated procedures, maybe not by the same path we have chosen, but by some plan for reducing its bureaucracy and some of its many activities in order to cope with the problems of staffing and dwindling memberships. Old customs die hard, though.

In any case, our April issue of *The Fossil* will be sending out a call for candidates to fill our three positions on this new Board of Trustees. Please think of stepping forward or standing ready to accept the call should you be invited to fill one of the appointive offices, i.e., Secretary-treasurer, Official Editor, Librarian, Historian, or Webmaster.

In other developments, at the NAPA convention at Massillon in July, Fossil members in particular were heartened to hear from Fossil Stan Oliner, NAPA's Librarian, that our late Fossil Victor Moitoret's immense library has found a home. The American Antiquarian Society has acquired the collection and will keep all pre-1902 papers and store the rest for two years before sending them to the library of the University of Illinois. The AAS now houses the largest collection of pre-1902 journals in the world according to Stan who should know inasmuch as he was one of the amateur journalists whose efforts and contributions went into making this accomplishment a reality. In response to Stan's request, I have authorized a donation of $250 toward the preservation of the Moitoret collection. At the same time I authorized a donation of $250 to the Special Collections of the University of Wisconsin at Madison for support of our Library of Amateur Journalism. We will make like donations periodically as our treasury allows.

As many of us are aware, the near-heroic efforts of Stan Oliner and Fossils Librarian Mike Horvat resulted in the acquisition of the vast collection of letters, journals, and other materials belonging to the late Willametta (Turnepseed) Keffer whose busy ajay involvement of 47 years was suddenly interrupted in 1989. This accumulation became part of the LAJ collection which was placed in the care of UW-Madison Special Collections. Recently Fossil Gary Bossler sent me a communication from Dr. Jeremy Brett, Project Archivist of Special Collections at the University of Iowa. In some boxes of ajay items, Dr. Brett had run across letters between Willametta and her fiancé Burton J. Smith who was killed during World War II. It should be mentioned that shortly after their association, Willametta became co-editor of the famed *Literary Newszette*, begun by Burton, and continued its publication until her death. Mr. Brett is busy preparing a finding aid for the letters. We have been in

communication about this and other matters relating to his find. I will keep you informed of any developments as they occur.

In closing, I pass along word to you who have not yet heard that Mike and Susan Horvat are revelling in the joy of having recently become new, first-time grandparents. Happy New Year!

BOY PRINTER FROM MAINE

(Reprinted from Fossil Fred H. Gage's page in the 1976 edition of It's a Small World*.)*

Question: who was the boy printer from Maine who established one of this country's largest publishing operations? More relevant to this page, he was also one of the active lads who helped the fledgling National Amateur Press Association develop 100 years ago.

Cyrus H. K. Curtis.

The only son of a musician, Curtis was born at Portland on June 18, 1850. While attending high school, he was forced to quit and set about earning a living. He'd been helping his family while going to school by selling papers on the streets.

For three years, with used hand-press and type bought in Boston, Curtis published a successful boy's paper called *Young America*. The limits of press and type required him to set, print and distribute one page at a time.

Curtis built up his circulation to 400 a week at two cents per copy. He did small job-printing & retained his paper route. At age 16, this busy lad had $200 invested in his little shop–quite a tidy sum at that date.

But the historic July 4 fire in Portland in 1866 wiped out his busy facility. The 1,500 buildings destroyed included Curtis' shop.

A lesser youth might have been destroyed also by such a calamity. But Curtis was an uncommon man. He moved to Boston, edited more papers & found a talented woman to be his wife. Then on to Philadelphia, where his major success bloomed.

It was a century ago this historic year that this journalist from Maine started an impressive publishing empire that became the Curtis Company. Producing its *Saturday Evening Post*, *Ladies Home Journal* and *Country Gentlemen* magazines for a hungry audience, the firm scored worldly honors.

At the prime of its life, the Curtis plant was larger than the Government Printing Office–with 4,700 employees and 22 acres of floor space!

FOSSIL NOTES

The Fossils send best wishes to Ann Vrooman for her ninetieth birthday on January 28, 2008. News of Ann's landmark birthday appeared in Bill Boys's electronic NAPA news bulletin. We all wish for Ann many happy returns.

WIZARD EDISON AS A BOY EDITOR

(Some New and Interesting Facts Concerning Our Fellow Fossil's Very Interesting Career As An Amateur Publisher)

Leonard E. Tilden

(Reprinted from The Fossil *[whole no. 58] for September 1925.)*

In 1907-8 Francis Arthur Jones wrote "The Life of Thomas Alva Edison," and the Thomas Y. Crowell Co., of New York, published it. Under the date of Sept. 1, 1924, Mr. Jones states: "After running through several editions, the life story (Edison's) was found to contain facts and statements necessarily out of date"; and so Mr. Jones has brought his very interesting story up to the minutes, so to speak, in a new edition, published by the same firm.

I ran across a copy of this book at the Congressional Library a few nights ago, and I read it with eagerness and delight, because it contained quite a little information about Fossil Edison's career as a boy editor and printer that was news, to me at least.

J. A. Roys, who was a prominent bookseller in Detroit, Mich., in the 60's, sold Edison the printing press on which he printed his little paper, *The Weekly Herald*. Biographer Jones has discovered that this press was a second-hand one, having previously been used for printing bills of fare of the old Cass House in Detroit. The name of the maker of the press is not given, nor does Mr. Jones tells us its size, etc. It certainly ante-dated the old B.O. Woods "Novelty" press, which I believe came into use by amateurs about 1870.

Mr. Jones again tells us that *The Weekly Herald* was printed on the railroad train on which young Edison was working as a news-vender, his "run"

being between Port Huron, Mich., where he lived, and Detroit, Mich. "But of course," remarks Mr. Jones, "Edison did not `set' all the type on the train, because you cannot set up type and have it stand up on a moving car."

Undoubtedly true, as of that date. One wonders where the youthful printer finished his type-setting between train trips. But he was resourceful even at that early period, and somehow or other, *The Weekly Herald* "came out" with more or less regularity for a considerable period.

Mr. Jones states that, as far as he knows, there is only one copy of the paper now in existence, and that it is treasured by Mrs. Edison above all other souvenirs of her husband's early days. The date of this copy is Feb. 3, 1862, at which time Mr. Edison was 15 years old. The paper is the size of a large sheet of business note, printed both sides, and unfolded. It is preserved between two sheets of glass so that both sides of the sheet may be read.

The paper is hanging on the wall of the inventor's "den" in Glenmont, Lewellyn Park, Orange, the Edison home. The head line of the paper is:

THE WEEKLY HERALD
PUBLISHED BY T. A. EDISON

TERMS:
The Weekly, Eight Cents per Month.

Like the amateur editors of the '70's, '80's, '90's, Edison states: "We expect to enlarge our papers in a few weeks."

As a philosopher he published the following:

"Reason, Justice and Equity never had weight enough on the face of earth to govern the council of men."

"Let me collect myself, as the man said when he was blown up by a powder mill," is another quip that must have made strong appeal to young Tom's sense of humor. Indeed, he still enjoys a good joke.

A market report in *The Weekly Herald* is of interest. It is as follows:

"MARKET NEW BALTIMORE–
Butter at 10 to 12 cents per lb.
Eggs at 12 cents per dozen.
Lard at 7 to 9 cents per lb.
Dressed hogs at $3.00 to $3.25 per 100 lbs.
Mutton at 4 to 5 cents per lb.
Flour at $4.50 to $4.75 per 100 lbs.
Beans at $1.00 to $1.20 per bush.
Potatoes at 30 to 35 cents per bush.
Corn at 30 to 35 cents per bush.
Turkeys at 50 to 65 cents each.
Chickens 10 to 12 cents each.
Geese at 25 to 35 cents each.
Duck at 30 cents per pair."

Some difference between Civil War and World War prices!

The little paper contained a half column of advertisements, one of them reading:

"Splendid Portable Copying Presses For Sale at Mt. Clemens: Orders taken by the News Agent on the Mixed."

Besides running a printing press in the baggage car of the train on which Edison was the news agent, he had a telegraph machine and engaged in experiments of laboratory nature, one of which set the car on fire. Alexander Stevenson, conductor at the time, was a Scotchman with a temper. The conductor put the fire out, and when the train arrived a few minutes later at Mt. Clemens, Mich., he pitched the young editor and "experimenter" on to the platform and hurled after him the type and printing press, the telegraph apparatus, a bottle of chemicals and in fact the entire contents of the "laboratory." Then he signaled the train to proceed, and left the future inventor forlornly standing among the ruins of his most cherished possessions.

Young Edison continued his paper, but it was set up and published at his home in Port Huron,. The type he used was given to him by a friend on *The Detroit Free Press*. It was through *The Detroit Free Press* that Editor Story of *The London Times* saw *The Herald* and quoted from it, stating that it was "the first paper ever printed on wheels."

At that time Edison had 500 subscribers to his paper. "But," says Mr. Jones, "in an unlucky hour Edison was persuaded by a journalistic friend to discontinue *The Herald* in favor of another paper of a more personal character, which the youthful editors and proprietors called *Paul Pry*. The editors were too outspoken, and some of the public characters of Port Huron and the surrounding towns whom they `guyed' were so sensitive that they took offense and were not slow in expressing their disapproval of the paper's policy. Indeed, one gentleman was so annoyed at a certain `personal,' reflecting upon himself, that on meeting Edison he wasted no time in telling him what he thought of his paper, but, seizing him by his coat

collar and a certain baggy portion of his pants, threw him into the canal."

Edison was a good swimmer, and, having dried out, he reflected that if others took a similar way of expressing their disapproval he would not have much time work out certain laboratory ideas he had. So he severed his connections with the paper, which soon suspended.

(Edison (1847-1931) was recruited by Leonard Tilden for The Fossils in June 1921 and remained on the membership rolls through his death. He never to my knowledge attended one of the annual Fossils reunions in New York City, but he did allow his name to be subscribed as one of the incorporating directors of the organization in 1927.)

EDISON AND THE WEEKLY HERALD

Francis Arthur Jones

(Extracted from the chapters "Boyhood and Youth" and "News Agent and Telegrapher" of Jones's Thomas Alva Edison: Sixty Years of an Inventor's Life *[New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Company, 1908].)*

When Al was about eleven years old the idea occurred to him that he might assist the family exchequer by engaging in some work during the time when he was not studying. He made the suggestion to his mother, but for a long time she was averse to his becoming a breadwinner at so early an age. At last, however, he coaxed her around to his way of thinking, and finally the two consulted as to what kind of work would be best suited to him. Al possessed opinions then very similar to those which he holds to-day,—that it does not matter much what you do so long as the work is honest and brings in cash. And therefore he decided that for the time being he might do worse than sell newspapers. His idea, however, was not to shout the news-sheets through the streets, but to obtain a post where the work would be less precarious; and so with that excellent judgment which has characterized most of his business transactions he applied for the privilege of selling newspapers, books, magazines, fruits and candies on the trains of the Grand Trunk Railroad running between Port Huron [then the Edison family home—ed.] and Detroit.

During the time that his application was being considered, for even then he believed in his own modernized version of the old proverb, "Everything comes to him who hustles while he waits," he managed to make a few nickels by selling newspapers on the streets. He had only been a short while at this work, however, when he received a letter informing him that he might have the job he had applied for and could commence business as soon as he pleased. He was very much elated, but his mother, ever fearful for his safety, was still somewhat worried. She had vivid visions of smash-ups with Al beneath the overturned engine, but he succeeded in laughing away her fears and a few days later entered on his duties with a light heart.

Some account of these days has come to us from Mr. Barney Maisonville, son of Captain Oliver Maisonville, who for over thirty years had charge of the Grand Trunk Transfer Steamers at Fort Gratiot and Detroit. Mr. Maisonville became acquainted with young Edison just prior to his going into business as a newsboy, but it was not until the war broke out he was thrown into close friendship with the future inventor. "As near as I can make out," said Mr. Maisonville on one occasion when speaking of Edison, "young Al obtained the privilege of selling newspapers, books, and fruit on the trains running between Port Huron and Detroit as a favor or for very small pay and received all the profits himself. One day he came and asked my parents to let me go with him on Saturdays, when there was no school, and help him with his work. Consent was given and thereafter for more than a year I was a `candy butcher' on the train. The war was going on and there was a big demand for newspapers.

"The train left Port Huron about 7 A.M.,, and arrived in Detroit at 10 A.M. Returning, it would leave Detroit at 4.30 P.M., and get back to Port Huron at 7.30 P.M. He instructed me regarding my duties on the first Saturday and then let me do all the business afterwards by myself, and while on the train I very seldom saw him. There was a car on the train divided into three compartments—one for baggage, one for United States Mail, and the other for express matter. The express compartment was never used and Al employed it for a printing office and a chemical laboratory. In it were stored jars of chemicals to make electrical currents, telegraph instruments, a printing press, some type and a couple of ink-rollers.

"Al was very quiet and preoccupied in disposition. He was of ordinary size, well built, with the thick head of brown hair and quite neglectful of his personal appearance. His mother kept him supplied with clean shirts and he always washed his face and

hands, but I think in those days he did not often comb his hair. He would buy a cheap suit of clothes and wear them until they were worn out, when he would buy another. He never by any chance blacked his boots. Most boys like to have money, but he never seemed to care for it himself. The receipts of his sales, when I sold for him, were from eight to ten dollars the day, of which about one-half was profit. But when I handed the money to him he would simply take it and put it into his pocket. One day I asked him to count it, but he said: `Oh, never mind, I guess it's all right.'

"When we got to Detroit we would take dinner at the Cass House, for which he would pay. Some of our time in Detroit was spent in buying goods to sell on the train, and we would go to the stores and buy papers, stationery, prize packets, fruit, peanuts, oranges, and candies. We carried the stationery and papers down to the cars ourselves, and the fruit men generally sent their goods to the depot.

"Al was a curious but lovable fellow. I was rather high-spirited at that time, and I verily believe that I was one of the few persons who could make him laugh, thought no one enjoyed a good story better than Al. He was always studying out something, and usually had a book dealing with some scientific subject in his pocket. If you spoke to him he would answer intelligently enough, but you could always see that he was thinking of something else when he was talking. Even when playing checkers he would move the pieces about carelessly as if he did it only to keep company, and not for any love of the game. His conversation was deliberate, and he was slow in his actions and carriage.

"Still, he showed sometimes that he knew how money could be made. When the papers containing the news of some big battle were published in Detroit he would telegraph to the station agents, who all liked him, and they would put up a bulletin board, and when the train arrived the papers would go off like hot cakes. I believe, however, that he would sooner have sat in his caboose studying than come out on the platform and sell newspapers.

"His own paper, the *Weekly Herald*, was a little bit of a thing about the size of a lady's handkerchief. Of course he did not set it up altogether on the train, because you cannot set type and have it stand up on a car, but it was printed there. Sometimes the station-master at Mt. Clemens, who was also a telegraph operator, would catch some country news on the wires, and he would write it down and hand it to Al when the train came in. This news, of course, would be later than that contained in the daily papers. He would immediately retire to his caboose, set it up, put it on the little form, and before the train reached Ridgeway he would have it printed off. I sold lots of these papers for three cents each."

Of the *Weekly Herald* there is, so far as is known, but one copy now in existence, and this is in the possession of Mrs. Edison, who treasures it beyond any other souvenir of her husband's early days. It hangs on the wall of the inventor's "den" at Glenmont, Lewellyn Park, the present residence of the family, and is preserved between two sheets of glass, so that both sides of the interesting little journal can be read. It is in a very good condition, if rather seamed down the centre, evidently through being carried folded for some time in the owner's pocket. The date on this copy is February 3, 1862, so it must have been published before the editor had reached the patriarchal age of fifteen. The papers is the size of a large sheet of business "note," printed on both sides and unfolded. Single numbers were sold at three cents apiece, but monthly or yearly subscribers obtained the paper for eight cents per month. At the height of its popularity the paper had a regular subscription circulation of five hundred copies, while another couple of hundred were bought by chance passengers on the train. All the work—setting up, printing, and publishing—being performed by the proprietor himself, a clear profit of something like forty-five dollars a month accrued from this modest publication.

The copy of the *Weekly Herald* which was shown to the present writer by Mrs. Edison contains plenty of interesting news, and though the spelling and punctuation are not perfect, the "editing" generally reflects the greatest credit on the young proprietor. The paper is a three-column sheet, the first column being headed as follows:

THE WEEKLY HERALD
Published by A. Edison
TERMS.
The Weekly Eights Cents per Month.

The first part of the paper is devoted to "Local Intelegence," and contains the following items of news and gossip:

"Premiums:—We believe that the Grand Trunk Railway, give premiums, every six months to their Engineers, who use the least Wood and Oil, running the usual journey. Now we have rode with Mr. E. L. Northrop, one of their Engineers, and we do not believe you could fall in with another Engineer, more careful,

or attentive to his Engine, being the most steady driver that we have ever rode behind (and we consider ourselves some judge having been Railway riding for over two years constantly,) always kind, and obligeing, and ever at his post. His Engine we understand does not cost one fourth for repairs what the other Engines do. We would respectfully commend him to the kindest consideration of the G.T.R. Offices.

"The more to do the more done:—We have observed along the line of the railway at the different stations where there is only one Porter, such as at Utica, where he is fully engaged, from morning until late at night, that he has everything clean, and in first class order, even the platforms the snow does not lie for a week after it has fallen, but is swept off before it is almost down, at other stations where there is two Porters things are visa versa.

"J. S. P. Hathaway runs a daily Stage from the station to New Baltimore in connection with all Passenger Trains.

"Professor —— [name unreadable] has returned to Canada after entertaining delighted audiences at New Baltimore for the past two weeks listening to his comical lectures, etc.

"Didn't succeed:—A Gentleman by the name of Watkins, agent for the Hayitan government, recently tried to swindle the Grand Trunk Railway of sixty-seven dollars the price of a valise he claimed to have lost at Sarnia, and he was well nigh successful in the undertaking.

"But by the indominatable perseverance and energy of Mr. W. Smith, detective of the company, the case was cleared up in a very different style. It seems that the would be gentleman while crossing the river on the ferry boat, took the check off of his valise, and carried the valise in his hand, not forgetting to put the check in his pocket, the baggageman missed the baggage after leaving Port Huron, while looking over his book to see if he had every thing with him, but to his great surprise found he had lost one piece, he telegraphed back stateing so, but no baggage could be found. It was therefore given into the hands of Mr. Smith, to look after, in the meantime Mr. Watkins, wrote a letter to Mr. Tubman Agent at Detroit, asking to be satisfied for the loss he had sustained in consequence, and refering Mr. Tubman to Mr. W. A. Howard, Esq., of Detroit, and the Hon. Messrs. Brown and Wilson of Toronto for reference. We hardly know how such men are taken in with such traveling villains, but such is the case, meantime Mr. Smith cleared up the whole mystery by finding the lost valice in his possession and the Haytian agent offered to pay ten dollars for the trouble he had put the company to, and to have the matter hushed up.

"Not so, we feel that the villain should have his name posted up in the various R.R. in the country, and then he will be able to travel in his true colors.

"We have noticed of late, the large quantitys of men, taken by Leftenant Donohue, 14 regt. over the G.T.R. to their rendezvous at Ypsalanta and on inquiring find that he has recruited more men than any other man in the regiment. If his energy and perseverance in the field when he meets the enemy, is as good as it was in his recruiting on the line of the Grand Trunk R. he will make a mark that the enemy won't soon forget.

"Heavy Shipments at Baltimore—we were delayid the other day at New Baltimore Station, waiting for a friend, and while waiting, took upon ourselves to have a peep at things generly; we saw in the freight house of the GTR. 400 bls of flour and 150 hogs, waiting for shipment to Portland."

A certain section of the paper was devoted to announcements of births, deaths, and marriages likely to interest subscribers and their friends, and not infrequently the young editor would be handed an item of the kind by one of his many patrons. He took care to let all know that the columns of his publication were always open for such announcements—not for payment, but as a courtesy. The present copy of the paper has no death or marriage notice, but there is a birth chronicled in the following succinct language:

"BIRTH.

"At Detroit Junction G.T.R. Refreshment Rooms on the 29th inst., the wife of A. Little of a daughter."

It would be interesting to know if the lady is still living.

Two announcements of especial interest and encouragement to subscribers are printed, viz.:

"We expect to enlarge our paper in a few weeks."

"In a few weeks each subscriber will have his name printed on his paper."

Then comes a little bit of philosophy which appears to be somewhat profound for a boy of fifteen:

"Reason Justice and Equity never had weight enough on the face of the earth to govern the councils of men."

Next are a number of "Notices," some of

which, it may be presumed, were either paid for as advertisements or inserted in return for "courtesies received":

"NOTICE.

"A very large business is done at M. V. Milords Waggon and carriage shop, New Baltimore Station. All orders promptly attended to. Particular attention paid to repairing.

"RIDGEWAY STATION.

"A daily Stage leaves the above Station for St. Clair, every day, Fare 75 cents."

"A Daily stage leaves the above named place for Utica and Romeo, Fare $1.00

"ROSE & BURREL, proprietors.

"OPPISITION LINE.

"A Daily Stage leaves Ridgeway Station for Burkes Cor. Armada Cor. and Romeo.

"A Daily stage leaves Ridgeway Station on arrival of all passenger trains from Detroit for Memphis.

"R. QUICK, proprietor.

"UTICA STATION.

"A daily Stage leaves the above named Station, on arrival of Accommodation Train from Detroit for Utica, Disco, Washington and Romeo.

"S. A. Frink, driver. Mr. Frink is one of the oldest and most careful drivers known in the State. (Ed.)

"MT. CLEMENS.

"A daily stage leaves the above named station, for Romeo, on arrival of the morning train from Detroit, our stage arrives at Romeo two hours before any other stage.

"HICKS & HALSY, prop."

Then comes "The News," which must have been somewhat scarce that week, for it is brief. Three items only, two of which scarcely appear to be in their right section, are recorded:

"THE NEWS.

"Cassius M. Clay will enter the army on his return home.

"The thousandth birthday of the Empire of Russia will be celebrated at Novgorod in august.

"`Let me collect myself,' as the man said when he was blown up by a powder mill."

The fifth column contains the only illustration of which the paper boasts. It is a woodcut of a railway train of a somewhat antique build, the engine, with steam up, emitting a great quantity of very black smoke. The cut appropriately heads the column devoted to the announcements of the "Grand Trunk Railroad," and is useful in the present number for the–

"CHANGES OF TIME.

"Going West.

"Express, leaves Port Huron, 7.05 P.M.

"Mixed for Detroit, leaves Pt. Huron at 7.40 A.M.

"Going East.

"Express leaves Detroit, for Toronto, at 6.15 A.M.

"Mixed for Pt. Huron leaves at 4.00 P.M.

"Two Freight Trains each way.

"C. R. CHRISTIE, Supt."

"Stages" played an important part in transportation during the days that the *Weekly Herald* flourished, and therefore it is not surprising to find that young Edison devoted considerable space to announcements in connection with them. In the column denoting changes of time on the Grand Trunk there are the following advertisements of–

"STAGES.

"New Baltimore Station.

"A tri-weekly stage leaves the above named station on every day for New Baltimore, Algonac, Swan Creek, and Newport.

"S. GRAVES, proprietor.

"MAIL EXPRESS.

"Daily Express leaves New Baltimore Station every morning on arrival of train from Detroit. For Baltimore, Algonac, Swan Creek and Newport.

"CURTIS & BENNETT, proprietors.

"FT. HURON STATION.

"An omnibus leaves the station for Pt. Huron on the arrival of all trains."

When passengers lost property or left parcels on the trains Edison was often appealed to and asked to announce the fact in the columns of his paper. He was always obliging in this respect, and though he seldom got payment for these advertisements it was highly gratifying to him when lost property was returned through a notice inserted in his paper. One such announcement appears in the copy under inspection, and is printed in large type in order to attract special attention:

"LOST LOST LOST

"A small parcel of cloth was lost on the cars.

"The finder will be liberally rewarded."

Though no address is given indicating the person to whom the lost property was to be returned, subscribers always understood that if they found the mislaid parcel,

or whatever it happened to be, they must communicate with the "Newsagent on the Mixed," which was Edison himself.

Many of Edison's regular subscribers were interested in farm products, and for their especial benefit he always devoted a certain portion of his paper to the market prices ruling during that week. It may not be without interest, therefore, to give the quotations as printed in this number of the *Weekly Herald*:

"MARKETS.

"New Baltimore.

"Butter at 10 to 12 cents per lb.
"Eggs at 12 cents per dozen.
"Lard at 7 to 9 cents per lb.
"Dressed hogs at 3.00 to 3.25 per 100 lbs.
"Mutton at 4 to 5 cents per lb.
"Flour at 4.50 to 4.75 per 100 lbs.
"Beans at 1.00 to 1.20 per bush.
"Potatoes at 30 to 35 cts. per bushel.
"Corn at 30 to 35 cts. per bush.
"Turkeys at 50 to 65 cts. each.
"Chickens at 10 to 12 cts. each.
"Geese at 25 to 35 cents each.
"Ducks at 30 cents per pair."

The last half-column of the paper is devoted to

"ADVERTISEMENTS"

and contains the following notices:

"RAILWAY EXCHANGE.

"At Baltimore Station

"The above named Hotel is now open for the reception of Travelers. The Bar will be supplied with the best of Liquors, and every attention will be paid to the comfort of the Guests.

"S. GRAVES, proprietor.

"SPLENDID PORTABLE COPYING
PRESSES FOR SALE AT
MT. CLEMENS
"ORDERS TAKEN BY
The Newsagent on the Mixed.

"Ridgeway Refreshment Rooms:–I would inform my friends that I have opened a Refreshment Room for the accommodation of the traveling public.

"R. ALLEN, proprietor.

"TO THE RAILWAY MEN.

"Railway men send in your orders for Butter, Eggs, Lard, Cheese, Turkeys, Chickens and Geese.

"W. C. HULCH, New Baltimore Station."

The *Weekly Herald* attracted the attention of the English engineer Stephenson, who happened to be travelling on the "Mixed" one day, and who purchased a copy. He complimented the young editor on his enterprise, said the paper was as good as many he had seen edited by men twice his age, and gave an order for a thousand copies. Even the *London Times* expressed interest in the paper, and unbent sufficiently to quote from its columns, and it is more than probable that if Edison had not followed the life of an inventor he would have continued his work as an editor, and, if he had, his name would, doubtless, have become equally famous in the newspaper world.

Mr. Maisonville, the gentleman already referred to, was on the train when the incident occurred which struck the death-knell of the *Weekly Herald*. The story has been repeatedly told, with various alterations and additions, but here is an authentic account of what actually happened. Young Maisonville was busily engaged in the front car selling papers and candies, while Edison was in the baggage van–or "Laboratory and Printing Shop," as the trainmen occasionally called it when in merry moods–engaged in one of his many experiments, when the train ran over a bit or rough road; there was a heavy lurch, and a bottle of phosphorus fell to the floor of the car and burst into flame. The woodwork caught fire, and Edison was finding considerably difficulty in stemming the progress of the fire when Alexander Stevenson, the conductor, made his appearance.

Stevenson was a Scotchman, an elderly man with iron-gray hair, a rubicund face, and an accent that would have been strong even in the heart of Midlothian. Moreover he had a temper, which may best be described as "hasty." He didn't waste any time talking while the fire was in progress, but quickly fetching some buckets of water, soon had the flames extinguished. Then he let out a flood of eloquence which sounded like a chapter from a Scott novel [the writer refers to Sir Walter Scott–ed.], and when the train arrived a few minutes later at Mt. Clemens Station, he pitched the young experimenter on to the platform, and hurled after him the type and printing press, the telegraph apparatus, the bottles of chemicals, and, in fact, the entire contents of the laboratory. Then he signalled the train to proceed, and left the future inventor forlornly standing among the ruins of his most cherished possessions.

Lest it may be supposed that Conductor Stevenson was utterly unfeeling and entirely lacking in all sympathy with searches after knowledge, a few words appear to be necessary. Stevenson had a good

heart, and was by no means unfriendly toward Edison, but, like many other worthy Scotchmen, his temper was fiery, and when his wrath was aroused he usually acted with a good deal of haste. He considered that the limit of friendship was reached when the boy set the train–his train–on fire, and thereby jeopardized the lives of those committed to his care. He argued that at such times it was well to act quickly, and so he summarily kicked the young experimenter and his belongings off the train at the first stopping-place, and congratulated himself on having done his company good service. Soon afterwards he resigned his position, and removed to a small village near St. John's, Michigan, where he became an important and respected member of the community. There he was made a Justice of the Peace, and for some years sat on the bench, where he administered the law with much more leniency than he had shown when a conductor on the Grand Trunk Railroad.

The man who sold Edison the printing-press used by him in the publication of his paper was J. A. Roys, at that time the most prominent bookseller in Detroit. "I sold Edison that famous printing-press," he often told customers who questioned him regarding his friendship with the inventor, "and I have sometimes wondered what became of it. I suppose it was pretty well smashed up when Stevenson dumped it out on the platform. The press formerly belonged to the man who was landlord of the Cass House, at one time the best hotel in Detroit. He used the machine to print the bill of fare in that hotel, but he made a failure of the place and went to smash. He afterwards became tenant of a house that I owned, but after the first quarter he failed to pay the rent. To reimburse me he turned over, among other articles, the printing-press. Young Edison, who was a good boy and favorite of mine, bought goods of me and had the run of the store, saw the press, and I suppose the idea of publishing a paper of his own immediately occurred to him, for he would catch on to anything new like lightning. He examined the machine, got me to show him exactly how it worked, and finally bought it from me for a small sum. Afterwards I saw many copies of the paper he printed, and for several years kept some of the as curiosities, but they got torn up or lost, and now I don't believe there is one to be had unless he owns it himself. He was a smart youngster, and I always prophesied great things of him.

Having lost his laboratory on the Grand Trunk, Edison immediately set about finding some other place where he could continue his experiments. He did not condescend to make overtures to Stevenson for a renewal of his tenancy of the baggage-wagon, but took his father into his confidence, explained matters, and begged for a room in the Port Huron house which he might fit up as a workshop. His father, however, on learning that the cause of his sudden exodus from the train was due to his setting fire to the car during his scientific investigations, at first declined to allow him to experiment in the house, but on his son promising not to store anything inflammable he relented, gave him a room near the roof, and told him he might "go ahead." So the boy bought more chemicals, some crude telegraph instruments, wire, and tools, and was soon more deeply absorbed in his scientific studies than ever.

He still continued to publish his paper, but it was set up and printed in his workshop at home from type which had been given to him by a friend connected with the *Detroit Free Press*. At this time he had over five hundred subscribers, so he had no desire to close down a concern which was founded on so sound a basis. But in an unlucky hour he was persuaded by a journalistic friend to discontinue the *Herald* in favor of another paper of a more personal character, which the youthful editors and proprietors called *Paul Pry*. This journal never was a real success. The editors were too outspoken, and some of the public characters of Port Huron and the surrounding towns whom they "guyed" were so sensitive that they took offence, and were not slow in expressing their disapproval of the paper's policy. Indeed, one gentleman was so annoyed at a certain "personal" reflecting somewhat upon himself, that on meeting Edison he wasted no time telling him what he thought of his paper, but seizing him by the coat collar and a certain baggy portion of his pants, threw him into the canal. The boy was a good swimmer, so that with the exception of a wetting he came to no harm. But he had learned his lesson. He argued that if others who took offence expressed themselves in a similar way, he would have little time to work out those ideas which were even then coursing through his brain. So he brook loose from *Paul Pry*, and the paper came to an inglorious end.

(I examined two later biographies of Edison–Robert Conot's A Streak of Luck: The Life & Legend of Thomas Alva Edison *[New York: Seaview Books, 1979] and Neal Baldwin's* Edison: Inventing the Century *[New York: Hyperion, 1995] to see what more they might tell me about Edison's career as a publisher. Conot relates that the* Weekly Herald *ran*

for a total of twenty-four weeks during the first half of 1862. The first issue preserved in Edison's den at the family home "Glenmont" in Lewellyn Park, West Orange, New Jersey, apparently remained with the family upon the death of Edison's widow in 1947; another copy is recorded at the Ford Museum in Detroit. (Edison's home Glenmont and the adjacent laboratories eventually became the property of the National Park Service.) Conot records two successor papers—Paul Pry *and* The Blowhard—*and indicates there are no known copies extant of either. He expresses some skepticism concerning Edison's account of his eviction from the train by conductor Stevenson noting that the experimenter also attributed his later deafness to the boxing which conductor Stevenson allegedly delivered to the boy's ears. Conot also notes that Edison and his boy-helpers also dealt in fruits, vegetables and butter, purchasing the commodities from farmers along the train line and reselling at a profit. Baldwin gives more credence to the traditional account of the accident which resulted in the expulsion of Edison and his equipment from the Grand Trunk railway car and relates that Stevenson's rage resulted from burning his hands with the spilled phosphorus. Both Conot and Baldwin indicate that Edison subsequently re-established his laboratory and print-shop in the basement of his parents' Port Huron home—rather than "under the eaves" as in Jones's account. (Another source reveals that an archaeological dig at the Edison home in Port Huron included type among its "finds.") Baldwin identifies Edison's co-editor on* Paul Pry *as William Wright, a printer's devil at the* Port Huron Commercial. *According to his account, Edison and Wright would sneak into the premises of Wright's employer to print* Paul Pry *on Saturday nights. Baldwin quotes one personal item from* Paul Pry*: "Young F. who has just returned from the army had better keep out of J.W.'s saloon." According to Baldwin, a doctor, erroneously believing the offending item to refer to his son, strode into the publication office and threatened to throw the editor into the river if he could be found—which he wasn't. Whether Edison was thrown into the canal by a reader offended by an item in* Paul Pry—*whether he was indeed boxed on the ears and expelled from the train when his laboratory-printshop caught fire—clearly there are aspects of Edison's early publishing career which seem to vary according to the sources used. The surviving copies of the* Weekly Herald*, however, stand as evidence of Edison's early publishing career. Like many early nineteenth-century papers, Edison's* Weekly Herald *appears to have aspired to commercial success. It was not until after the national organization of the hobby in 1876 that more and more young printers gravitated toward publication exclusively on a hobby basis—with copies available for exchange and contributions only, rather than for sale individually or by subscription. W. Paul Cook's "for love only" and "money cannot buy it" were certainly far removed from young Edison's endeavors with the* Weekly Herald*. Nevertheless, despite all the legends concerning Edison's activity, it is clear that he was a participant (if perhaps for something less than a year) in the nineteenth-century youth publishing movement which resulted from the availability of inexpensive hand printing presses and eventually blossomed into the organized amateur journalism hobby. It is certainly fitting for us—like Fossil President Leonard Tilden—to celebrate Edison's involvement with youth publishing. The great inventor's name was an adornment for the rolls of our members in 1921-31 and of our directors in 1927-31. Perhaps it was just as well that he did not live to experience the Great Fossil War of 1933-35 over the fate of LAJ—although as a veteran of many business lawsuits he might in fact have been able to offer wise counsel to the contending factions.)*

JESSE ROOT GRANT: AMATEUR JOURNALIST

Ken Faig, Jr.

If Thomas Alva Edison was Leonard Tilden's "prize" recruit for The Fossils, Jesse Root Grant (1858-1934), the youngest son of President Ulysses S. Grant (1822-1885) probably ran a close second. *The Fossil* for September 1926 ran Evan Reed Riale's biographical sketch of Tilden, then serving as Fossil President. Therein was noted the fact that Tilden, then serving as Sergeant-at-Arms of the New Hampshire State Legislature, had been part of the New Hampshire legislative delegation which attended the funeral of President Grant in New York City on August 8, 1885. Riale's sketch of Tilden's life noted further:

"Jesse R. Grant helped organize the first amateur press association organized in this country, and Len has located him at 219 Lovell Street, Santa Cruz, Calif., where he has mailed him a copy of THE FOSSIL, sent him a letter inviting him to join the

Fossils, following it up two weeks later with a night telegram. He has not heard from Mr. Grant, but Len says: `I am not through with him.'

"Fossil C. H. Fowle has a letter from Jesse R. Grant written on White House stationery under date of January, 1872, stating that he will be unable to attend a meeting of the Eastern Amateur Press Association. The letter is in an Executive White House envelope, franked under the name of the then private secretary to President Grant. The facts given here will be mailed to Jesse R. Grant, with a renewed request to join the Fossils."

Tilden's persistency paid off. An article entitled "Salute Jesse R. Grant!"–announcing Mr. Grant's decision to join The Fossils–was featured in *The Fossil* for January 1927. The article bore the subtitle "Youngest Son Of The Great War General Steps Into Our Ranks" and included an informal portrait of Mr. Grant smoking a favorite pipe. The article states that the researches of Edwin Hadley Smith had established Mr. Grant's involvement with *The K.F.R. Journal*. Only a few biographical facts were provided:

"Jesse R. Grant was born in St. Louis, Mo., Feb. 6, 1858, the son of Ulysses S. Grant and Julia Dent Grant. He studied at Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., and at the Columbia Law School, N.Y. City. `Who's Who in America' informs us that he is a Democrat, and that his favorite club is the Democratic Club of New York City."

The WikiPedia article on Jesse Grant reproduced on our back cover reveals a few more facts about the erstwhile Fossil. Our inside back cover, reproduced from *The New York Times* of August 27, 1918, discusses not only Mr. Grant's much-contested divorce but also the fact that he had made a bid for the Democratic nomination for president against William Jennings Bryan in 1908.

Like Edison, Grant consented to add his distinguished name to the membership rolls of The Fossils, but was not otherwise active in the organization. He died in Los Altos, California, on June 8, 1934, aged seventy-six years. His son Chapman Grant (1887-1983) was a 1913 graduate of Williams College and made his career as a zoologist and publisher, publishing the journal *Herpetologica* between 1932 and 1960. Chapman's son Ulysses S. Grant V (b. 1920) was in the news in 2000 when he decided to sell 250 Grant family items through Sotheby's.

We are fortunate that Jesse Grant discussed his involvement in the amateur journalism hobby briefly in his autobiography *In the Days of My Father General Grant* (Harper & Brothers, 1925), written in collaboration with Henry Francis Granger. Most importantly, he reprinted a substantial segment from Rev. Charles Morris Addison's *Half Century of the K.F.R. Society* (1921), which is also reprinted in this issue of *The Fossil*. In his own account, he revealed that the K.F.R. Society actually first developed from a group of boys who played baseball together:

"There was a vacant lot of considerable size south of the White House, upon which we boys played ball. We called ourselves the `Potomac Base Ball Club.' Ability to play ball, not pedigree or social position, was the requisite for enrollment in that club" (pp. 76-77). "It was from the members of this baseball club that my cousin and I and a few others formed the society known as the `K.F.R.' This is a secret society, its one secret being its name. Speculating upon the meaning of those cryptic letters, father [President Ulysses S. Grant–ed.] proclaimed it the `Kick, Fight, and Run' Society" (p. 79). At the time he wrote his autobiography in 1925, Jesse Grant and Al Parris were the only two survivors of the original six members of the K.F.R. Society. A fiftieth reunion attended by twenty-five members had been held at the Army and Navy Club in Washington DC in 1921–apparently the occasion for the publication of Rev. Addison's memoir. Grant states "I read along to the fiftieth reunion" (p. 83) which I interpret to mean that he attended vicariously by reading Addison's memoir. The mention of Oakes Ames in Addison's account stirred Grant's memory of the terrible scandals which marred his father's presidency and the much more recent scandals (the Teapot Dome scandal) which had marred the presidency of Warren G. Harding. He wrote (p. 85): "...Good people speculate, the ribald jeer, and many wonder, is there an honest man? Surely there is no new thing under the sun."

I have never seen any issue of *The K.F.R. Journal*. I do not know whether it was printed in that gardener's tool house on the White House grounds where the K.F.R. Society had its headquarters from December 25, 1871, until the end of President Grant's administration on March 5, 1877. It would certainly be interesting to note Jesse Grant's name on the editorial roster of the first volume and to see the advertisement of President Grant's office hours in the six numbers of the first volume. Today it is difficult to imagine that

U.S. presidents once kept open office hours. Lincoln in particular was much besieged by office-seekers during his presidency.

Mention of Lincoln also brings to mind that fact that his beloved son Tad (Thomas) was also involved in the amateur journalism hobby, issuing *Brown School Holiday Budget* in 1866 with collaborator Sterling Rounds. His involvement in the hobby was another of Edwin Hadley Smith's discoveries. I never seen any more extended discussion of Lincoln's involvement and *Brown School Holiday Report*. The publication was included by Edwin Hadley Smith in an early listing of the highlights of his collection.

MEMORIES OF THE K.F.R. SOCIETY

Rev. Charles Morris Addison, D.D.

(Reprinted from Half Century of the K.F.R. Society *[1921].)*

There is no end to the number of clubs formed by boys. The stories of most of these associations are both similar and short. But to the mind of the historian, and, he is sure, to the minds of his fellow-members, the story of the K.F.R. is unique, and to us it has still, after fifty years, a real and deep interest.

Most boys' clubs have a short and tumultuous existence. But here is one which has lived with the same purpose for half a century, and for nearly forty years with the same membership, save the inevitable loss by death. And it had attained this continuity because it made, from the very boyish beginning, friendship as its principle. Most self-formed boys' clubs are soon destroyed, being broken in pieces by actual blows, or, like Job, by words. But not so the K.F.R. It is not known that out of our seventy-six men knowing each other in every degree of intimacy, none has ever quarreled with another. This is the more remarkable as on rereads the old and already fading minutes of our first meetings. How we have ever been willing to speak to each other at all, after the way we treated each other in those days, is a wonder. Very few of us have escaped being expelled in disgrace at one time or another. Everything has happened that could destroy friendship, and yet no friendships have suffered.

There were meetings when the president could only keep order by shying kindling wood at the heads of unruly members; days when there were free fights; days when there were fierce rivalries and personal jealousies, causing a quick succession of cliques and cabals, and caucuses, and then heart-burnings and resignations, and then remorse and humble return to the fold. It seemed as though we couldn't get away from each other. We were held by our principle of friendship, which then, as ever since, has been stronger than our differences. It is so now. It has resulted in a friendship which, beginning in propinquity—we were all West-end boys in Old Washington—has become independent of space. And on this fiftieth anniversary we think it worth while to preserve for our children and others a story that may help them.

Like all life, our society began in a small way. One day Jesse Grant and his cousin, Baine Dent, met Al Parris and asked if he wouldn't like to start a club. No one can imagine Al's saying no to a proposition like that. So three more boys were approached, Harry Cutts, Walter Chew, and Frank Bolles, and the six proceeded to organize. They first came together for this purpose on Christmas day, 1871. The place was a small room, a gardener's tool house, on the White House grounds, given by President Grant to his son Jesse as a playroom. Jesse Grant was made the first president. The first new member was, naturally, Walter Chew's twin brother, Len. How they got separated at first is not known. Then applications for membership, as one early historian modestly reports, “came pouring in from all sources.” Out of these were selected Wilford Harrison, Gus Almy and Will Almy—another set of twins—Blair Lee, and Laurie Riggs. This made twelve members, and now, as the constitution came to be adopted, the tender society was nearly wrecked by weeks of fierce debate as to whether the number should be twelve or thirteen. It must have been settled, because Walter Benet became the thirteenth member. The name was the proposal of Frank Boles and is our only secret.

The minutes of the first sessions, from December, 1871, to the spring of 1872, have been lost, but we have them all from then on. On November 9, 1872, it is recorded that, “With great disorder the meeting then adjourned.” A motion was made and passed on December 7, 1872, “That a fine of ten cents be imposed upon all that are guilty of fraudulent voting.” “As order must be kept at all costs,” another writes, “Mr. Bolles moved that W. Chew and Duncan be fined five cents for interrupting the chair! The president decided them fined three cents each.” A merciful reduction!

The preamble to the first constitution read:

"As boys approach the time when they shall be boys no longer, they are necessarily obliged to make some preparation for their embarkation on life's stormy and tempestuous ocean, Therefore, it was resolved to unite the undersigned persons in some bond of unity greater than everyday acquaintance. The before-mentioned persons accordingly resolve to form a society which should and shall be called The K.F.R. Society.

"And to meet at regular intervals to improve themselves and to practice in various ways for the final examination which all must undergo before entering the shining portals of light. The objects of this society were, are, and ever shall be, to improve the members individually and collectively in mental and moral culture and to encourage them in their attempts towards literary and mental success."

As means toward these exalted ends, there was first a circulating library, which soon grew to over two hundred volumes, and next a debating society. But evidently the elaborate purpose of our preamble was not clearly understood for early in 1872 Jesse Grant moved "That the society have some motive." Passed. A committee on motive was appointed. I find no record that the committee ever reported.

Our next step in a literary direction was the publication of a magazine, called the *K.F.R. Journal*. The first editor was Joe Partello, assisted by Walter Benet and Jesse Grant. It cannot be called a modest little sheet, for its first editorial contained these words:

"The want of some vent for our extraordinary literary genius has long been felt, and hence the origin of this design."

The first two numbers consisted of four pages, but with the third it blossomed into eight. For the first and only time the White House put an ad. in a public print announcing President Grant's office hours; an ad. which the *Journal* proudly bore through its first volume of six numbers.

Its second volume began in November, 1873, with C. M. Addison, Frank Bolles, and A. K. Parris as editors. It contained boyish stories and occasionally it touched upon national affairs, as when it remarks, in those early days of graft, that "Congressmen regard Oakes Ames' little memorandum book much as they would look upon a prize package of nitroglycerine...."

As the boys grew up many of them left Washington, some for the army and navy, and the sons of officers and government officials, from the President down, left when their fathers' terms of office were over.

This led to the constant election of fellows to fill vacancies and to a system of honorary memberships which began in 1872 and lasted until 1883, when the last active was elected and we all became honoraries. In 1877 the society left its cramped but dear quarters on the White House grounds for new and more manly quarters on the third floor of 1427 F Street.

"THE GAD'S HILL GAZETTE"

(Reprinted from The Fossil *[no. 49] for April 1922.)*

According to a writer in *The Boston Transcript* of recent date, one of the most sought of Dickens items is the file of *The Gad's Hill Gazette*, an amateur newspaper published at Gad's Hill by Henry Fielding Dickens, son of the novelist, from July 22, 1865, to Feb. 3, 1866, the last of these seven numbers being the valedictory. The January, 1866, issue contains a history of the juvenile publication. Its origin, it is stated, is due to S. Dickens, Esq., who started the paper about 1860, and edited it with great vigor for one year. "In his time," it continues, "the *Gazettes* were written with pen & ink upon common note paper and sent every week to five subscribers... The note paper made way for larger paper, the pen and ink for A Manifold Writer, the latter for A Printing Press, and since this last great addition was made to our resources, we have devoted our whole attention to the enlargement of the *Gazette*."

It is also stated that the subscription list had grown to forty-six, but that the end was near, as the editor had been charged with carrying on the journal for mercenary motives. Accompanying this item are four letters by H. F. Dickens to "subscribers," two of which are printed. The journal records the doings at Gad's Hill in the Dickens household, and bears the unmistakable evidence of the novelist's oversight, encouragement and occasional contributions. This rarity has been reprinted from the S. Causeley copy, but this is the first file of any consequence to come into the auction market.

(This small article is uncredited and may possibly be the work of then official editor J. Austin Fynes of New York City. It would surely be interesting to learn more of The Gad's Hill Gazette *and it is likely that the huge literature concerning Charles Dickens would reveal more. I for one am curious to know the relationship of the first pen & ink version editor "S. Dickens" to the*

famous author and also the circumstances under which Henry Fielding Dickens was charged with operating his amateur publication for mercenary purposes. Of course, there were already many collectors of the work of his father Charles Dickens and if the work of the elder Dickens was featured, even occasionally, in The Gad's Hill Gazette *the publication would have been attractive to collectors of Dickens work. If indeed the young Edison built his* Weekly Herald *up to a circulation of 500, it was surely by the sweat of his own brow, while young Dickens might well have been able to increase his circulation list to forty-six through a relationship with a bookseller catering to collectors of his father's work.)*

SEXUAL THEMES IN AMATEUR JOURNALS 1935-1955

Ken Faig, Jr.

Our centerfold for this issue of *The Fossil* offers a sampling of sexually-themed cover illustrations selected from amateur journals of the 1930-1955 period:

(1) uncredited cover art from John D. Pursell's *Much Ado* (vol. 2 no. 1) for Spring 1934–depicting a springtime theme with bunnies listening to Pan playing his pipes (another *Much Ado* cover from this period shows a stylized rabbit family in full Easter dress);

(2) Ira Swindall's drawing of a young damsel beset by a springtime breeze from Robert H. Price's *Today's Youth* (vol. IV no. 1) for Spring 1938;

(3) Ira Swindall's drawing of another damsel in distress–this time threatened by a highly stylized mouse–from Robert H. Price's *Today's Youth* (vol. IV no. 2) for Summer 1938;

(4) uncredited cover art from Frank W. Egner's and Robert H. Price's *Lorelei* (vol. 1 no. 1) for August 1955 depicting the legendary water spirit from which their journal was named.

These stylized illustrations with sexual themes are unlikely to draw much notice in today's world where moderately explicit depictions of sexuality have penetrated even the mainstream media. We need turn only to the comic strips to note how things have changed. In Lynn Johnston's "For Better or Worse," daughter April and her boyfriend seize the opportunity posed by the absence of parents and siblings to make out in the bedroom until rudely interrupted by an unexpected visitor. In "Zits," Jeremy's closeness to his girlfriend Sarah doesn't prevent him from fantasizing about his school's female guidance counselor. Even in terms of today's comic strips, erotic cover art in amateur magazines from the 1930-1955 period is restrained.

Of course the primary restraint was the convention of the times when these cover illustrations were published. If the creators of "Zits" can depict Jeremy's fantasies in a fairly explicit manner, the amateur editors and cover artists of the 1930-1955 period were required to handle sexual themes in a more restrained manner. This is not to deny that strong themes underlay their work and that their work created controversy despite its restraint.

Rabbits have been a symbol of fecundity for centuries and the anonymous *Much Ado* cover artist cleverly invokes the sensuous awakening of spring by lining up three of the tribe to listen to Pan playing his pipes. (Not much noticed is a bird at Pan's feet who is apparently chirping along with his playing.)

Ever since the invention of photography the display of the leg of the female of the human species has been recurring theme and Ira Swindall's cover illustration for the Spring 1938 number of *Today's Youth* depicts a strong springtime breeze catching the skits of a young damsel out for a walk. (Swindall's drawing recalls a very famous photograph of Marilyn Monroe with her skirts raised by the updraft from a vent.) That it is the naked or sheerly-stockinged leg that is the focus of the artist's attention is further clarified by Swindall's Summer 1938 cover where the threat of a squeaky little stylized mouse causes the subject to raise her own skirts in distress. Both of Swindall's subjects wear high-heeled shoes–another sexual trope. The heels allow the artist to emphasize the ample busts of both of his subjects although their exposed legs are clearly the center of his attention. Swindall's Spring 1938 subject is more conventionally feminine than his Summer 1938 subject–the latter wears what appears to be a man's tie–but in both depictions it is the fetish of exposed leg that dominates.

The river spirit adorning the masthead of Egner's and Price's *Lorelei* is interesting in that she clearly reflects the naked poses acceptable in the "respectable" men's magazines of the time (for example, *Playboy*). While she is fully nude and her ample breasts are fully exposed, strategically placed tresses of her long hair hide her nipples. In her modest seated position, her private parts are invisible to the viewer. Beside her sits the lyre which she uses–in

addition to her own charms–to lure unwary males to their watery deaths. Of course, Egner's and Price's Lorelei seems almost chaste by today's standards. Full frontal nudity became the accepted standard in "mainstream" men's magazines by the late sixties. But Egner's and Price's Lorelei reflects the limits of acceptable titillation in the mid-fifties.

Robert H. Price (1907-1984) of Pueblo CO, the publisher and editor of *Today's Youth*, was one of the founders of the American Amateur Press Association in 1936. Volume 1 Number 1 of *Today's Youth* dates as early as July 1931 and publication continued into the 1940s. Price had been involved in the Lone Scout movement in the 1920s and like many others he drifted into the Erford-Noel United after the Boy Scouts took over the Lone Scouts. He was a bachelor who reportedly worked in a steel mill and was responsible for care of an elderly mother and aunt. Despite his role in the founding of AAPA, not many amateur journalists met Price in person; Helen and Sheldon Wesson became exceptions when they visited him on a cross-country motor tour in the 1950s. Helen reportedly found Price's home a spooky place. Price became active again in AAPA in the mid-fifties and early-sixties and held association office as secretary-treasurer before a scandal arose regarding mishandling of funds. He was apparently hard up and because of his senior status as one of the association's founders no charges were brought against him. I do not know much of Price's cover artist [Hiram] Ira Swindall. Like Price, he came into AAPA from the Erford-Noel UAPAA having published *Texas Horned Toad* for UAPAA. He was responsible for design of the AAPA seal in 1936. During World War II, he married amateur journalist Vivian Chatfield and was engaged in design work. Chatfield had been involved with her friend Helen Wesson in the AAPA Hostesses, who wrote letters to amateur journalists in the service. Neither Swindall nor his wife remained active in the hobby after the war. Swindall's 1938 covers for *Today's Youth* are certainly distinctive for their era.

Frank Egner (1915-1985) was a Cincinnati fireman who charmed amateur journalists with his lively personality and singing at amateur gatherings. He teamed with Price to produce *Lorelei* in the mid-fifties. While *Today's Youth* contained "realistic" stories of modern romance, the focus of *Lorelei* on sexuality was consistent. Of the co-editors, Price was clearly the more gifted in imagination. Egner's "Optical Illusion" in the second issue is a simple voyeuristic account of the benefits of X-ray glasses accompanied by the author's crudely-drawn illustration. "Moulting Mermaid" in the third issue–with the two editors as co-authors–concerns a bathing suit designed to disintegrate. "Morning Eye-Opener" by Egner and "Sign here, please..." by Price are reprinted herein from the first issue of *Lorelei*. Perhaps the authors worked hardest on these introductory pieces–Egner's story has a fairly clever premise and is less voyeuristic than his other fictional attempts while Price's story is strongly reflective of his personality.

Price's short poems are perhaps as effective as any of the other contents of *Lorelei*. Here are two examples:

Stolen Pollen

When a car is parked along a drive,
Or in some sheltered glade;
It's possible–as in a hive–
Some honey's being made.

Acclimatization

"Don't be silly," she exclaimed,
"Suppose my husband's spying–
Just put yourself into his place."
And Brother was I trying!

Some of the longer poems centered on exposed female flesh on the burlesque stage are less striking.

Egner and Price certainly had shock affect in mind when they published *Lorelei*. A few of the comments published in their second issue are exemplary:

"Oh, that LORELEI! I'm still blushing a bit. Anyway, *Esquire* better keep an eye on its laurels"–Violet Simpson.

"I raised my eyebrows a few times but then I suppose that's what you boys wanted!"–Marge Adams.

"Now, now, boys!"–Fred Eichin.

"Congratulations of the birth of Lady LORELEI. She is certainly a full-blown and voluptuous lass. In other hands she might descend into the realm of poor taste but with you and Frank to guide her, we need not fear."–Al Fick.

Clearly, some amateur journalists enjoyed *Lorelei*, while others correctly surmised that it would go away if ignored.

Today, the amateur press associations differ

somewhat in their attitude toward sexual themes. Traditionally, of course, the presence of boy- and girl-members in the ranks led the associations to exercise conservatism as to content, especially after the bundle system originated in the thirties. An association could stand in danger of losing its bulk mailing permit if the parent of a boy- or girl-member objected to the content of a mailing. With fewer and fewer members under the age of majority (now lowered to eighteen), the associations have exercised less concern regarding bundle contents in recent years. NAPA regularly features fiction with adult themes–I particularly remember one story concerning a young boy with an absent father who realized that his mother was attracted to a jack-of-all-trades who had befriended the family in the father's absence. Jake Warner's *The Boxwooder* regularly features fiction with adult (not pornographic) themes while Arie Koelewyn's annual gathering of the works of young poets has been known to print the "F" word. By way of contrast, the AAPA mailer still exercises a greater vigilance against potentially offensive material–perhaps AAPA learned a lesson with *Lorelei* and other provocative zines. At the 2006 Cleveland AAPA convention one presenter at a panel on zines complained of being excluded from the AAPA mailing for just a "few cuss words" (as he described them).

Of course, every association has its own culture and the issue of censorship of amateur bundles–while a fascinating one–would take us far from our present theme. Sexuality is a perennial theme of human existence but its fit with our human cultural institutions and social conventions has raised issues throughout recorded history. Many male football fans who wouldn't bat an eyelash over an exposed female breast in another venue were strongly offended when Janet Jackson's "wardrobe malfunction" exposed the same bodily part during the Super Bowl (with some cooperation from Justin Timberlake). Similarly, a female exposed nude from the rear in one of the Super Bowl commercials drew objections from viewers who would draw no objection to the same exposure in a salon or spa commercial. So, our tolerance of sexuality depends strongly not only upon the manner of presentation but also upon the venue. We have to remember that there are some of our members who consider any expression of sexuality outside the marital bedroom both distasteful and immoral. Robie Macauley of *Pine Needles* had a distinguished career as a senior editor at *Playboy* and wrote novels with strong erotic content. Captain Victor Moitoret didn't like explicit depictions of sexuality in printed matter and was not bashful about saying so. Of course, he had commanded ships at sea and undoubtedly considered pornographic material and homosexual relations as vices threatening the good order of his crew. (Imagine the challenge today when those same ships are full of both young men and young women!)

Perhaps it is the fact that the amateur journalism hobby leaves a printed record that leads most of its members of be conservative regarding the use of sexually-themed material in their publications. There are perhaps no more disturbing survivals of ajay endeavors than what I would call the "nasties"–typically anonymous publications which strove to attack the character and morals of well-known participants in the hobby. Perhaps we can devote an issue of *The Fossil* to the "nasties" at a future date–for if our objective is record the history of our hobby in a fair and unbiased manner, we have to acknowledge that we have historically fallen into quarreling, sometimes with spite and vitriol. Sexuality is of course far too delicate and important an aspect of human existence to be consigned to the "nasties." Most of the responses even to such an offering as *Lorelei* were polite and the majority who objected were perhaps well-advised to remain silent in the confidence that over the course of our history material which doesn't fit culturally has disappeared from ajay. It would be a sorry mistake to conclude from the rarity of sexually-themed material in mainstream ajay that the participants in the hobby by and large sublimated sexual frustrations by spending their time on amateur publications and the petty politics of amateur organizations. (Of course sublimation isn't all bad–consider Leonard da Vinci and Isaac Newton–who compensated for lack of sexual lives with magnificent intellectual achievements.) One cannot read the poetry of Edna Hyde McDonald without knowing she was a full-blooded woman who could feel extraneous desire even within the marital bond. It was she who commented how the "belles" of the 1938 Cincinnati NAPA convention enlivened the entire proceedings. Another well-known female amateur with a strong sexual persona was Helen Vivarttas Wesson. Like her predecessors who broke into ajay in the late nineteenth century, she was not about to be treated as a second-class citizen because of her sex. Even before the Marx Brothers filmed "Coconuts" in 1928, Florida was known as the land of bathing beauties and real estate speculation, and when Helen went there for an

early ajay convention she was one of the beauties on display and ended up with a bad sunburn. When NAPA President George Trainer intimated that Helen excelled in the social side of the hobby, she retaliated with *Lil' Red Devil*, for whose masthead Bill Haywood drew the editrix in a voluptuous asbestos suit. Helen was a faithful wife and a devoted mother, but nevertheless she could christen her fanzine review column (in *The Unspeakable Thing*) provocatively as "Bundling With Helen." (Bundling was a colonial custom whereby well-bundled engaged couples could accustom themselves to sharing a bed without engaging in intercourse.) The fact is that ajays were and are real, full-blooded people and as such generally take care to keep their intimate lives private. The fact is that our intimate lives are such a fundamental component our humanity that it is very difficult to add meaningfully to our understanding of sexuality through artistic endeavor. If Aretino hit the target with his sexual postures, Egner and Price surely fell short of the mark (albeit perhaps with good intentions) with their *Lorelei*. One need only look at the emptiness of professionally produced pornography to see the vast abyss lying in wait for anyone seeking to use explicit sexuality in artistic endeavor, even for profit. Whether in words or in picture, it is an exquisitely difficult aim to achieve. Sometimes the anatomy or geography of human sexuality is simply not that interesting or inspiring. The whisper of desire in a poem or the voluptuous display of the fully dressed body routinely inspire more passion than the dreary repetition of explicit depiction of sexual acts.

Humor has always had a strong representation in amateur publications, and humor and tease are in fact essential to effective presentation of sexual themes. Ben F. Bianchi of Daytona Beach FL, was the master of the humorous approach to controversial themes with his amateur magazine *The Mocking Bird*, published from 1936 to 1943. The masthead of an early issue came with the depiction of the skull and crossbones warning on a bottle of poison and the inscription: "Don't Say We Didn't Warn You." Bianchi, born June 3, 1874, was in his sixties at the time he published *The Mocking Bird*. In the early forties, Willametta Turnepseed of Springfield OH was one of NAPA's most enthusiastic recruits–a bundle of energy who considered an hour of sleep at convention-time an hour wasted. Willametta was a reasonably handsome female–albeit no great beauty–and was soon engaged to Burton Jay Smith, another ajay dynamo. In *The Mocking Bird* for May 1942, Bianchi printed a drawing of a Florida bathing beauty with this poem printed underneath:

This Aint Willametta

All the guys in Colorado
Are a calling Willametta;
And I surely and sincerely
Really hope that they can getta.
They are calling her for Prexy
And I dont think she'd be easy,
Though those western guys
Might like to petta.

In another issue, Bianchi tackled an even more lofty amateur personage, Edna Hyde McDonald (Vondy):

Vondy

She's the sweetheart of the N.A.P.A.,
And you all know who I mean
Cause she gets out all her pub-li-fy-cations
On a mim-miouw graph machine.
She's not inclined to be catty or citty,
But in fact is rather nice,
And like the good old nursery rhyme,
Is made of sugar and spice.

P.S. Sugar deleted on account of restrictions.

Using the same drawing he used for his Willametta poem, Bianchi reflected on the passing scene in his issue for July 1941:

Tell me not in mournful numbers
A.J. boys without a glance
All have quit a pressing presses
And are pressing coats and pants.
For they're serving in our army
And are far beyond our reach;
Although lots of them spend weekends
Spooning girls upon our beach.
"Let us then be up and doing"
With a heart for any fate.
Mayhap us old guys can find one:
On the beach, and make a date.

In the nineteenth century it is possible that Bianchi would have been drummed out of ajay, particularly for kidding the girls as he did. But while *The Mocking Bird* may have been "horrible," Bianchi never let it become a "nasty." Perhaps it is worth noting that the definitive article on Bianchi's press was written by no less a Puritan than Vic Moitoret. I think Vic well realized the power of laughter. So many aspects of the human condition are tragic, laughter is a powerful if not an essential tonic. The World War was about to break upon the United States in all its ferocity when Japan attacked on December 7, 1941. But in July Bianchi could still write from sunny Florida about the scarcity of dates on the beach because of all those GIs.

Would *The Mocking Bird*, *Today's Youth* and *Lorelei* best be buried and forgot? It may be that they were not a good fit within the overall culture of amateur journalism. However, I for one think they added something to the amateur landscape. Without lapsing into the rude, nasty or pornographic, they helped us understand our intimate selves better than we might otherwise have done. Experiencing art with sexual themes may be uncomfortable, but if it is art, it should seldom be boring. I think the work of Bianchi, Price, Egner and Swindall all passes that test. In an age of total explicitness, where the latest celebrity post on the Internet is already a matter of history, these exponents of a more hidden, yet more fascinating rendition of human sexuality may yet have something to teach us.

MORNING EYE-OPENER

Frank W. Egner

(Reprinted from Lorelei *vol. 1 no. 1 for August 1955.)*

As a rule, I didn't pass by the engine house on the way to work. Peggy and I had moved into an apartment on the west side some time ago, but yesterday she had told me her sister was coming to stay with her for a couple of days, so I decided to move out of the tiny apartment and took a room at a small hotel on the east side.

That's how it happened that I was going by as the fire engines were returning from a run that morning. I always was fascinated by the huge, gleaming machines, so I paused a moment to watch.

There was the usual bustle that follows the return from a fire run. Hose to be changed, apparatus to be checked. The engineer prepared to make the entry in his record book, paused momentarily, then called to the Captain, "What was that address again, Cap?"

"47 Lanvue Court, Apartment C," was the reply.

Well, I fairly jumped when I heard that. It was the apartment Peggy and I shared. I was alarmed and hastened over to the officer.

"Captain," I began, "I have a—er—friend living at that Lanvue address. Tell me, was it a big fire? I mean, anybody hurt?"

The officer's look was reassuring. "No," he said. "Nothing much. Just some food burning on the stove. A lot of smoke, but not much fire."

I uttered a quick "thanks," much relieved, then decided to check with Peg to see if she was okay. The gal might have been upset by the incident.

There was a phone in the tavern down the street. I started off in that direction. But first, for some reason, I hesitated a moment to light up a cigarette. I hadn't noticed that I was standing beside one of the open windows of the firehouse until the voices drifted my way.

"It was really something," one fireman was telling another. "Here's this food burning on the stove but the bedroom door was shut and this fellow and gal didn't know a doggoned thing about it until we barged in on them. A neighbor smelled the smoke. Talk about a surprised soldier and girl. They—"

But I didn't wait to hear any more—I felt sick. Here was Peg telling me her sister was coming just so she could get together with her soldier boy friend. I couldn't believe it—why, she had assured me that she was through with him for good when we'd decided to team up.

Who can figure these women? Just three months ago she led me to believe I meant everything to her and she just couldn't wait until we were married.

Believe me, the way things worked out, I'm glad we never were.

SIGN HERE, PLEASE...

Robert H. Price

(Reprinted from Lorelei *vol. 1 no. 1, for August 1955.)*

"I need that signature," Gus stated succinctly.

Gus is my boss.

"So go get it," I advised him.

"No," Gus shook his head. "I'm letting you handle it."

"You're sweet," I said. "In fact, you are the nicest boss I ever had–aside from being the only one."

He grinned. "You have a way with women," he declared.

"I know. That's why I'm single," I said tersely.

Gus looked sad for a moment. "It isn't right."

"That's your opinion," I said. "Every married man would like to see every single one tied up too."

"Marriage is a wonderful thing," Gus declared unctuously.

"Yeah. No home should be without it," I said. "Only thing is, I live in a cave–with hot and cold running spiders. But speaking about caves–where does this female Dracula have hers?"

Gus produced a slip of paper.

"I knew I could depend on you," he said with false heartiness.

I heaved a sigh. "The things I do to pay for my bread and butter–"

"Bread, butter and blondes, don't you mean?" asked the boss.

"I'm between conquests, just now," I said frigidly and stalked out of the office.

I picked up my car from the parking lot and drove to the address indicated on the slip of paper. It was one of those low, rambling affairs popularly described as Early Californian. But there was nothing Early Californian about the young woman in the near-Bikini style bathing suit reclining lazily on a bench near the pool–nor anything even remotely connecting her with Dracula either. Blonde, blue-eyed and petite; she was also–to put it tersely–flat where it flattered and curved where it mattered. She was, in short, the type of woman I can get along without...

If my arm's being twisted unmercifully, that is. I explained the reason for my visit.

"I see," she said, thought it didn't sound like she did at all.

"Sit down and explain it a little more," she invited, patting a spot on the bench beside her.

I sat down and went through the whole thing again.

"I think I understand it now," she said pursing her lips thoughtfully.

That did it. I kissed her. Lengthily and enjoyably.

"Gus told me you could be plenty persuasive," she whispered.

Gus! I did a double-take.

"I've been sabotaged!" I remarked sorrowfully. "And I detest conniving women."

"I'll change," she promised.

"Like a leopard," I said.

"Don't call me names," she ordered. "Just shut up and kiss me again."

So I did. It seemed like a darned good idea. For both of us...

"Give me the paper," she said finally. "I'll sign."

"Not just yet," I muttered.

And she didn't.

Not for several minutes anyway.

DOES A HOBBY HAVE A HISTORY? A REFLECTION

Ken Faig, Jr.

I think the answer to the question posed in the title for this essay is self-evident: every hobby–indeed virtually every aspect of human existence–has a history. The real question is whether the history is worth writing.

Certainly, the collecting hobbies all have histories, and many of them have been written. The hobby of book collecting supports an entire profession of book dealers. Many dealers and collectors have put pen to paper to record the history of their business and hobby. Stamp-collecting is another hobby that supports a profession (stamp dealers) and has had histories written. Great collections–both of books and of stamps–have been gathered and have been broken up. Some collections have been preserved for posterity through donation to institutions. Others have been lost through fire, flood or theft. It's all part of the story.

One might go down the list of collecting interests–paintings, prints, sculpture; furniture, automobiles, fabrics; gems, rocks; butterflies, stuffed animal skins; comic books; medicine bottles; antique dolls; hubcaps; marbles; Beanie Babies. Out there, there are the collecting hobbyists and the markets to support them (e.g., for some collecting hobbies, E-Bay). Of course some collectors drift into dealing in the items they collect. Auction catalogs record the history of some of the grander collecting hobbies. Some of the lesser hobbies at least support price guides and other similar tools. Occasionally, a narrative history of one or more form of collecting may be attempted, with greater

or lesser interest. I guess "A World History of Marbles" will be of interest if you collect them.

On the other hand, other hobbies and diversions rarely produce any attempts at recording there history. Let's suppose a local bowling league was started in 1957 and is still waxing strong. Many thousands of games will have been bowled, scores recorded, many gallons of beer and pounds of pizza consumed in the good times afterward. If the league is coeducational, probably many matches leading to permanent unions have resulted from acquaintances made on those bowling lanes. But who would think try to assemble a history out of all those good memories? Even if there were team sponsors who remained faithful through all those fifty years, who would want to know how the team sponsored by Joe's Office Supply fared compared with the ones sponsored by Al's Auto Parts and Barone's Restaurant? The league trophies on display at A-1 Bowling Lanes may comprise the only record of the rise and fall of the various teams in the West Town Bowling League–apart from the memories of the participants. Maybe the A-1 Bowling Lanes will want to honor its longtime customer the West Town Bowling League after fifty years of patronage. Perhaps there will be a special banner to mark the fiftieth anniversary–or even pizza and beer on the house to mark the occasion. An anniversary book–even a slender pamphlet–is much less likely for most of our hobbies. Perhaps the West Town Bowling League will fall upon hard times in the future and cease to exist. Perhaps even the A-1 Bowling Lanes will close if there are no longer enough bowlers to make it profitable. People who bowled together will still socialize–at least in small groups. But formal reunions–such as are held for high schools and colleges–are much less likely to occur. For one thing, there is no longer a sponsoring institution if the hobby group itself has ceased to exist. When the last bowler dies, perhaps a child will recall what great fun Mom and Dad used to have at A-1 Bowling Lanes which stood where Super DVD Mart now stands. And when that child dies, perhaps the memory of the West Town Bowling League and A-1 Bowling Lanes will have passed from human recollection.

I don't think that the passing of the memory of a hobby-related institution is necessarily any tragedy. All those good times belonged to the bowlers themselves and even the memory of their lives eventually passes from human recollection. Only a family genealogist will recall most of us say three generations down the road. And that again I do not believe is any tragedy because a necessary part of human life is standing aside so that future generations can prosper and take the stage in their own right. It **is** important that the future generations have some general understanding of the development of their institutions, but the detailed memory of by-gone individuals and their likes and dislikes is generally unnecessary. So much of human history consists of tragedy that one wonders if it is any honor to be recorded by history–how many, for instance, of the Roman Emperors would you care to have known? Well, perhaps Marcus Aurelius the philosopher-emperor, but there were surely emperors–like Tiberius, Caligula, Elagabalus–whose ill repute has carried across even the millennia. While the history of the saints can make inspiring reading, the truth is that the vast majority of worthy human beings have passed into eternity without any record of the many good things they did in their lives. Their identities have essentially perished. Given the plethora of information in our electronic world, perhaps we would be unable to give their histories much attention even if we had them available to us. We have after all our own lives to live.

So, why try to record the history of one of your hobbies? There are really only two reasons. First and foremost, by all means write your history if the writing will give you pleasure. It may be your way of recalling all the good times you had. In this sense, writing the history almost becomes a part of the hobby itself. Second of all, write it if you think the record has a chance of enriching the human experience–if only for the (perhaps) small number of persons who may choose to pursue your hobby in the future. If your hobby was a competitive sport, perhaps you can impart a sense of the exultation of victory and the agony of defeat. (Of course, if your sport has a professional incarnation, the pros will likely always receive the most attention from the historians, with the amateurs receiving only glancing notice.) If your hobby is obscure (like collecting marbles), perhaps your history of marble competition and collecting will become an established part of a small literature. (As sure as I have published this, a large marble "fandom" is certain to come forward to refute my comments.) The basic fact, however, is that the participants in most hobbies are not writers by either vocation or avocation–like most individuals, they are hard-pressed to write a few paragraphs in a thank-you note. I won't launch into a tirade on how e-mail has degraded our writing and

communication skills.

Of course, writing skills are the hurdle separating most hobby participants from the participants in the amateur journalism hobby–most ajays have at least some rudimentary writing skills, and many are very skilled indeed with the written word. By its very nature, our hobby creates and potentially leaves behind "relics" in the form of amateur journals. Few of these have historically survived their owners (or even their owners' loss of interest in the hobby), but there is a beginning of collections of amateur journals at institutions like the American Antiquarian Society, University of Wisconsin-Madison, New York Public Library, Western Reserve Historical Society and others. In a country with freedom of the press, amateur publishing is a part, albeit a small one, of our culture. We cannot necessarily hope to convey all of our personal experiences in the hobby–the wonderful people we have met, the publications we have created or encountered–but perhaps there is something we could write that would illumine an aspect of our hobby for future generations who may come to study this small compartment of our culture. Perhaps we may feel that NAPA and AAPA have received too much of the attention and that UAPA in its various factions deserves more attention before those memories die. Perhaps we may feel that a particular amateur journalist whom we have known deserves a decent biography–more than just a window-dressing obituary. Perhaps we feel that amateur poetry or amateur fiction-writing deserve a history of their own. If in fact the motivation is strong enough to overcome the inertial tendency to do nothing, we will write an account of the topic which interests us and perhaps even see it to publication. With print-on-demand technology, virtually anyone willing to spend $500 can publish a book-length work which will remain in print indefinitely. If in the last analysis we only succeed in writing an account of interest to a limited circle of friends and hobby participants, that is really no tragedy. For first and foremost, the goal of writing and publishing was to give ourselves the pleasure of writing and publishing. Some kind comment from our friends may be the only feedback we want or need. If no copy of our book is ever preserved in an institutional collection, there may no harm done. We generally forget how large a proportion of the human printed record has simply ceased to exist in any copy here on earth–some texts we can only read in Heaven or Hell. Of course, we can attempt to make an end-run around the extinction process by paying to register our work for copyright. (In fact, copyright registration does *not* assure preservation of the registration copies in the Library of Congress and over the decades librarians have discarded much material deemed unworthy of permanent preservation.) That every printed work should receive attention and study appropriate to its own merit and importance is really the important goal. It is no tragedy if a minor work sits dusty and neglected on the shelves until the time comes when some future student can appreciate its potential relevance.

So let us not be offended if institutional libraries do not compete intensively for collections of amateur journals. Let us not deem it a tragedy if our age and infirmity prevents us from recording memories of an institution which has been of great importance in our lives. But if you have the power to raise your pen and the conviction that you have something to say which is important for the understanding of the role which our hobby has played as a human institution, by all means set down your account. *The Fossil* is begging for contributions and would love to have for its pages anything which enriches our understanding of the amateur journalism hobby.

Of course a hobby has a history. Is it worth knowing and writing about? Today, you the participants in the amateur journalism hobby must be the primary judges of this question. The possibilities for the future of our hobby are many. In one hundred years, the hobby as we have known it may be extinct and forgotten except in a few remaining institutional collections and battered copies of Spencer's *History*. On the other hand, it may be alive and well in a new format (e.g., electronic publications) and eager to learn about its paper-and-ink predecessors. Perhaps an academic history of the hobby will produce a new surge in outside interest. Our perception of the possible futures can only be dim. On the other hand, our living memory of the past–going back perhaps fifty years and more–may be very vivid. I do not see a Ken Burns on the horizon eager to preserve the history of the amateur journalism hobby for us. At least for the near-term future, I believe we will have to set down our own memories of the hobby if we wish them to be preserved, to influence the assessment that future generations may make of our own small compartment of human culture. The attitude of the professional writer is that writing is strenuous and demanding work. Its rewards may fluctuate according to the rise and fall of reputation and of publication trends. The

professional writer by and large will consider the amateur writer to be insane unless he or she is in fact practicing for a professional career. Does writing for motivations other than earning a living make any sense whatsoever? If the answer YES can be defended, I believe it is amateur writers themselves who will need to mount the defense. One can certainly envision a future technocratic society in which the creation of a written record is a highly restricted and controlled activity. Such a future society may be incapable of any appreciation of the amateur spirit. What fun we had and how we had it may be totally incomprehensible to its members. Indeed, we ourselves may be wholly forgotten, along with our hobby. Perhaps the existing ajay collections did not make it through the filter when the final, surviving electronic information bank was created. The more history we create, the greater the likelihood that we will make it through the inevitable filtering of time. Even if we do not prevail, it does not mean that we have failed. We are not dependent upon the verdict of history in forming our own judgment regarding the importance of the amateur journalism hobby **in our lives**.

FOSSIL REVIEW

Ken Faig, Jr.

S. T. Joshi and David E. Schultz (eds.), *O Fortunate Floridian: H. P. Lovecraft's Letters to R. H. Barlow* (Tampa FL: University of Tampa Press, 2007), ISBN 978-159732-034-4, xxvi+468pp., $40.

I long ago resolved that I would not attempt to review every new publication relating to H. P. Lovecraft for *The Fossil*: first of all, because even as a Lovecraft specialist I cannot keep up with all the literature now being produced worldwide and secondly, because *The Fossil*–devoted to the history of the amateur journalism hobby in all its branches–cannot focus a disproportionate amount of attention even on the most-famous exponent of the hobby. I will make an exception for this beautifully designed and produced book–perhaps the most handsome edition ever accorded any of the works of the Providence sage–on several grounds. First of all, because the recipient of these letters, Robert Hayward Barlow (1918-1951), was probably Lovecraft's most notable recruit for NAPA during his renewed period of activity during the 1930s. Other correspondents of Lovecraft–like August Derleth, Duane Rimel, and J. Vernon Shea–also joined NAPA at Lovecraft's invitation during this period, but Barlow published two amateur magazines [*The Dragon-Fly* (two numbers, 1935-36) and *Leaves* (two numbers, 1937-38)] in his own right and received the NAPA story laureate for his fiction early in his amateur career. Frank Belknap Long (1901-1994) and Alfred M. Galpin (1901-1983) were earlier proteges of Lovecraft in the hobby–during the period when his primary activity was in the United–while Victor E. Bacon (1905-1997) was a recruit during the last years of the Lovecraft United who later served as NAPA president and was for many years known as "Lovecraft's last recruit." Secondly, our Fossil Historian Sean Donnelly collaborated with Richard Mathews in the design of this volume. The binding is a rich green cloth with Lovecraft's full signature stamped in gold on the front cover. A drawing by Barlow is used for major section headings. Timothy Kennedy's photograph of a live oak with Spanish moss graces the dust jacket and helps to recall Lovecraft's long stays with the Barlow family in Florida in 1934 and 1935.

Many of Lovecraft's older friends were shocked to learn that Lovecraft had named Barlow his literary executor in his "Instructions in Case of Decease," but the letters from 1931 to 1937 printed in this volume help us to understand how this unexpected designation came about. Barlow took pains to hide his youthfulness when he first came into correspondence with Lovecraft through *Weird Tales* in 1931, but by the time he arrived for his first visit in the Barlow household in May 1934, Lovecraft knew that his host would celebrate his sixteenth birthday on May 18, 1934. The reader of this correspondence file will have the privilege of witnessing the development of Lovecraft's and Barlow's relationship from the beginning point of established author and young admirer to the ending point of literary confidantes. The young Barlow had many interests–including not only book-collecting, writing, painting and sculpting–and one of Lovecraft's roles as mentor was to help his young disciple channel his energies and determine his developmental plan. Later in Barlow's life, Barbara Meyer would serve in the similar role in advising Barlow to pursue his ultimate career as a Mesoamerican anthropologist.

Most of Lovecraft's and Barlow's epistolary discussions focused on the domain of fantasy and supernatural literature–not only the popular writers and magazines of the day but also the lasting classics in the field. Through their correspondence, Barlow developed

unequalled knowledge of Lovecraft's own writing and in fact came to own all but five of the surviving manuscripts of his major stories. Of the "fugitive five" that escaped Barlow's fabled "Vaults of Yoh-Vombis"—the name he adopted, from a story by Clark Ashton Smith, for the large closet in which he stored his collection—"The Shunned House," "Under the Pyramids" and "The Horror at Red Hook" were owned by Samuel Loveman, "The Thing on the Doorstep" by Duane Rimel, and "The Haunter of the Dark" by Donald Wollheim. The first two were owned for many years by Lovecraft collector Peter J. Maurer (1929-2005), auctioned at Sotheby's in New York in December 2006 and acquired by bookseller Lloyd Currey for a magnificent catalog marking the seventieth anniversary of Lovecraft's death; the third is the property of the New York Public Library; the fourth was donated to Brown University's Lovecraft Collection by Duane Rimel; and the fifth is believed to remain in private hands. Barlow often received the gifts of these manuscripts in return for creating typescripts—a task which Lovecraft himself abhorred.

Inevitably, however, a portion of their correspondence was devoted to the amateur journalism hobby which they shared, and from these letters we can obtain a good sense of Lovecraft's own relationship with the amateur journalism hobby during the 1930s. Like many in the hobby, Lovecraft was shocked when Earl Kelley, NAPA president in 1931-32 and publisher of *Ripples from Lake Champlain*, committed suicide with a revolver after hosting the convention in Montpelier VT in July 1932. Lovecraft was instrumental in inducing Ernest A. Edkins (1867-1946), whose prior activity dated to the 1880s and the 1890s, to return to activity during the thirties—and encouraged Barlow to follow in the footsteps of Edkins and Edwin B. Hill (1866-1949) in the literary side of the amateur journalism hobby. (Both Edkins and Hill received some rough treatment from some of the "young blood" of the thirties who wanted to do things their way and undervalued the sage counsel of the wizened elders of yesteryear.) Lovecraft generally supported the "stormy petrel of ajay," Ralph W. Babcock (1914-2003), during his tempestuous year as NAPA president in 1934-35. Longtime NAPA politician Edwin Hadley Smith (1869-1944) became Babcock's deadly enemy and spent much of the middle years of the thirties—when not occupied with the Library of Amateur Journalism—stirring up controversy over various Babcock-related issues. Lovecraft's most lasting service to the hobby was as a member of the NAPA critical bureau. He spent four years (1931-35) in this service, the last two as chairman by appointment of president Harold Segal. Despite his burdens as editor of *The Fossil*, Truman J. Spencer (1864-1944) agreed to relieve Lovecraft as chair in 1935. In honor of his service on the critical bureau, Lovecraft was elected one of three NAPA executive judges for the 1935-36 term. The post—normally largely an honorary position—drew heavily on Lovecraft's energies when Smith continued to pursue his vendetta against Babcock and President Hyman Bradofsky (1935-36), beset by critics, needed to place unusual reliance upon the judges. Through it all, Lovecraft kept his focus on the lasting values of the hobby—and urged Barlow to complete the second issue of his *Dragon-Fly* before the 1936 convention so it could adorn President Bradofsky's term. Barlow had constructed a printery and hermitage across a small lake from the principal family residence, and during his 1935 visit Lovecraft helped Barlow set type for Frank Belknap Long's *The Goblin Tower*. At Christmas 1935, Barlow surprised Lovecraft with a 42-copy edition of his story *The Cats of Ulthar*, a copy of which, inscribed by Lovecraft to his friend Samuel Loveman, was auctioned at Sotheby's in December 2006, acquired by bookseller Lloyd Currey, and recently cataloged by him at $27,500. (To give you a sense of the prices now commanded by vintage Lovecraftiana, Currey has catalogued the manuscripts of "The Shunned House" and "Under the Pyramids," respectively, at $100,000 and $55,000 while he offers the complete surviving file of Lovecraft's letters to Frank Belknap Long for $150,000—the same letter file which Long himself sold to Samuel Loveman for $500 during a period of financial need.) Perhaps only five percent or less of the total wordage in the Barlow correspondence file is devoted to the amateur journalism hobby—but nevertheless we can derive therefrom a very good sense of the writer's relationship to the hobby during the 1930s and his value system.

Sometimes Lovecraft's correspondence is amazingly frank—especially when one considers the youthfulness of his correspondent. A discussion of his inordinate attachment to family heirlooms on pp. 238-240 is especially moving; therein occurs (p. 239) one of very few typographical errors in this edition—"sand-shakers" for "salt shakers." Lovecraft's finances were always marginal and perhaps it is fortunate that he did not live longer potentially to experience a period of

extreme privation which might have cost him his few remaining family heirlooms. On the other hand, it is entirely possible that he would have a achieved new ground-breaking strides in the marrying of science fiction and the traditional supernatural story in the 1940s–strides which if financially successful might have even enabled him to recover and to restore the much-mourned homestead at the corner of Angell Street and Elmgrove Avenue in Providence, ultimately demolished in 1961, which had passed out of the family as early as 1904. We can only speculate about alternative universes which might have yielded for us two more decades of Lovecraft stories.

On the other hand, we also witness Lovecraft's declining health first-hand in these frank letters. The periodic episodes of intestinal "grippe" and the diminished energies experienced by Lovecraft in the thirties were actually the markers of advancing colon cancer, which ultimately killed him in 1937. By the thirties, Lovecraft was only comfortable at temperatures above eighty degrees and really only thrived in tropical warmth of ninety degrees of more–hence his great gratitude for the hospitality of the Barlow family in 1934 and 1935. The Barlows lived in a remote location near the hamlet of Cassia, outside of DeLand in Volusia County. Lovecraft had earlier fell in love with Florida in 1931 while visiting Henry St. Clair Whitehead (1882-1932) in Dunedin and Dudley C. Newton (1864-1954) in St. Augustine. He was sorely tempted in later years to abandon Providence for the warmth of Charleston or St. Augustine–perhaps only familiar scenes and family connections (largely his surviving aunt Annie Gamwell) kept him put. In their flat at 66 College Street Lovecraft and his aunt also enjoyed steam heat piped in from the John Hay Library next door–Lovecraft customarily kept his own study and bedroom in the upper eighties throughout the winter and shivered through the spring and fall with the help of a kerosene heater.

Lovecraft's attitude toward women as evinced in these letters is also striking–the passages occurring in his discussion of Santyana's *The Last Puritan* (pp. 364-367) being particularly striking. Had he by this time concluded that Sonia Greene Lovecraft (1883-1972) had cultivated his affections–resulting in their marriage in March 1924–for her own selfish ends? (Lloyd Currey, in cataloging Sonia's 1932 passport, speculates that marrying Lovecraft was Sonia's entré to obtaining U.S. citizenship in 1925.) At his wife's insistence, Lovecraft had commenced court proceedings to terminate their marriage in Rhode Island in the spring of 1929, but he never signed the decree to make their divorce final, while telling Sonia she was at liberty. When Clark Ashton Smith's friend Helen Sully visited in 1933, Lovecraft seemed to delight in the fear she experienced when visiting St. John's Churchyard at midnight. When Maurice Moe's son Robert introduced him to Eunice French, a brilliant young student at Brown, during the last months of his life, he treated her no differently than he would a promising young male acquaintance. In actuality, Lovecraft appears largely to have excised sexuality from his life after the failure of his marriage to Sonia Greene.

In all honesty, reading this large collection of Lovecraft correspondence took me back to my years as a student at Brown University in 1970-72, when I was able to read this and other Lovecraft correspondence files in the original. (Today scholars visiting Brown must use photocopies of the letters unless there is a demonstrated need to consult the originals.) Curator Christine Hathaway had known Professor S. Foster Damon, who originally accepted the Lovecraft papers for the John Hay Library, and had corresponded with Sonia Lovecraft Davis. Deborah Niswonger was then creating the first comprehensive catalog of the Lovecraft Collection, and upon one occasion–perhaps Lovecraft's August 20th birthday–invited all the local Lovecraftians to an ice cream social at her home. Lovecraft and his friends were famous for consuming gargantuan quantities of ice cream at Maxfield's in Warren, Rhode Island–feats well-chronicled in the Barlow correspondence file. Editors S. T. Joshi and David E. Schultz and book designer Sean Donnelly are all my friends–so for once I will grant this exemption and devote special attention to a Lovecraft publication in *The Fossil*. Soon to come in two volumes from Hippocampus Press is Lovecraft's correspondence with August Derleth, with the same two trusty editors. Doubtless other Lovecraft correspondence files will be published in the future as well. Some files will probably never be published in full–for example, the letters to Robert Bloch and Clifford M. Eddy, once largely owned by Dr. Stuart David Schiff, have now been largely dispersed. Hopefully, the letters to Frank Belknap Long, offered as a unit by Lloyd Currey, will be acquired by an institution, kept together and preserved for posterity.

How does this great renaissance of interest in H. P. Lovecraft impact our hobby and the study of its

history? We all know the sorry story of how the Library of Amateur Journalism was bereft of nearly all of its Lovecraft and Lovecraft-related content by some nameless vandal during the 1970s. We cannot change the fact that some amateur publications containing works by Lovecraft are now worth hundreds or even thousands of dollars on the book collectors' market. We can be advocates of safe and respectful handling of rare amateur material for while we cannot restore the missing Lovecraftiana to LAJ, we can try to protect the other riches that lie therein–scarce early poems by Elsa Gidlow, tiny editions of literary classics by Edwin B. Hill, great amateur writing by Ernest A. Edkins, Burton Crane, and many others. In short, we can provide context for the work of scholars who investigate writers and printers who participated in our hobby. From my own humble working with amateur journals, I can provide a footnote or two for *O Fortunate Floridian*. On page 330 Lovecraft encouraged Barlow to get in touch with one B. F. Binnaki–actually Ben F. Bianchi, publisher of *The Mocking Bird*–who receives some notice in this issue of *The Fossil*. On page 351 the amateur Brandt is Ohio printer Irwin O. Brandt, who printed many amateur magazines for others in the thirties. On the other hand, hobby historians can benefit from the delvings of researchers like Joshi and Schultz. In earlier writer, I had speculated about correspondence between Lovecraft and Rev. Frank [Francis] Graeme Davis (1881-1938), NAPA official editor in 1917-18 and president in 1918-19. Writing to Barlow in February 1934, Lovecraft provided a capsule summary of his relationship with Davis:

> Concerning the Reverend Frank Graeme Davis–I exchanged two or three letters with him around 1916 or so, but never got to be a close correspondent. He seemed to me the least bit affected–dandified–over-precious–subtly sissified–or something like that. But he surely was a man of immense cultivation & cleverness. I think I have all the numbers of his *Lingerer*–not many. [In fact four in total–one in 1910, two in 1917, and one in 1919–ed.] My friend Moe of Milwaukee knew him quite well at one period. Nowadays he's all out of touch with amateurdom–only a name to the present generation.

Davis in fact made a grand final appearance in an amateur venue at the NAPA convention in Chicago in July 1934–I wish I could find the group photograph from this convention to see if Davis is in it and if he wears clerical dress. *Time* magazine for July 16, 1934 reported on this convention (in an article "a.j.'s" which you can find in *Time's* electronic archive and to which Arie Koelewyn first drew my attention) and noted that "a local bishop made a speech on the Philosophy of Amateur Journalism"–the local bishop being of course the Right Reverend Francis Graeme Davis. After being dismissed from the Episcopal priesthood in 1925, Davis became a Liberal Catholic, and later an Old Catholic clergyman; I do not know the source of his episcopal orders. Of course, Lovecraft's knowledge of Davis was epistolary only; a personal acquaintance like Elsa Gidlow found Davis anything but sissified. Barlow was interested in sexual rebels and dissidents and his correspondence with Lovecraft reflects an interest in writers like Roswell George Mills (whose "Tea Flowers" was reprinted in our July 2006 issue) and Radclyffe Hall. The fact is that a complete understanding of Lovecraft is impossible without a working knowledge of the amateur journalism milieu in which he developed. As amateur journalists, we can help to bring to life ghostly figures like Davis, Bianchi, and Brandt who are unknown to literary scholarship at large. Even though a vandal tore nearly everything with Lovecraft's name on it out of the Library of Amateur Journalism in the 1970s, he cannot deprive us of the fuller background which nourished Lovecraft's muse. Perhaps the hobby can yet help to restore explicit Lovecraft content to the Library of Amateur Journalism. Stan Oliner and The Fossils have already made a noble beginning with a bound volume of Horace Lawson's amateur journals. Single issues of *The Wolverine* containing Lovecraft stories have sold for $2000 or more, so that I think our gift would probably be a $5000 or better volume in the antiquarian book market.

O Fortunate Floridian has been produced in an edition of 500 hardbound copies by University of Tampa Press; in addition, there are 50 slip-cased deluxe volumes signed by both editors. There is–at least for the present–no paperbound edition. Donnelly's and Mathew's beautiful book design is worthy of Joshi's and Schultz's meticulous editing–there are copious notes for each letter, a glossary of prominent individuals mentioned in the correspondence, a bibliography listing all works mentioned in the correspondence, associated memoirs by Barlow, and even two surviving postcards that Lovecraft sent to the Barlow family's handyman Charles Johnston. Most university presses would ask $65 or more for a 500-page volume produced so handsomely in hardcovers. *O Fortunate Floridian* is to be frank a steal at $40. The great majority of books published depreciate in value but my prediction is that the first edition of this volume

will double in value in ten years. I do not urge its acquisition for mercenary motives–although the University of Tampa Press (utpress.ut.edu) would appreciate your support whatever your motives. It is frankly a volume for the Lovecraft specialist. But what a volume! As a young fan first acquiring works by Lovecraft in the 1960s I never dreamed that any such volume would or could be published. The first volume of *Selected Letters* as published in 1965 was enough of a wonder when it arrived in my mailbox that year. At first I tried to acquire books published by Arkham House through department store book departments and then more reliably through booksellers but by 1965 I was buying books directly from Arkham House. What a world of wonder August Derleth introduced me to at $3, $4 and $5 per volume. (I just missed getting a copy of *The Shunned House*–for collectors only!–at $17.50.) A book like *O Fortunate Floridian* could not have been imagined by me in 1965. Now, forty-two years later I hold it in my hands and try to do it some justice. The fact is, you can largely step into the shoes of Robert Hayward Barlow, if you wish, when you read this book. What a privilege!

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Ken Faig, Jr.

I hope you have enjoyed this issue of *The Fossil*. Two of my principal topics–Thomas Alva Edison and Jesse Root Grant–were public men with lesser-known connections to our hobby. Secondly, I have tried to write about three twentieth-century amateur journalists–Robert Price, Ira Swingall and Frank Egner–who brought a different perspective to the subject matter and illustration of amateur magazines.

The April 2008 issue should be devoted to our late member James Guinane and to Australian ajay more generally. Fossil Trustee Stan Oliner has gathered most of the source material and will be a guest co-editor for the April issue.

I'd like to do some research on the involvement of Abraham Lincoln's beloved son "Tad" (Thomas) Lincoln in the amateur journalism hobby and perhaps I can prepare an account of my findings for a future issue of *The Fossil*. To tell the truth, however, there is already too much of my own writing–and my own perspectives–in the current issue. If there is a topic relating to the history of our hobby which is of importance to you, I would love to feature ***your*** account of it in a future issue of *The Fossil*.

LAJ NEWS

Ken Faig, Jr.

President Guy Miller received a kind acknowledgement of The Fossils' donation of a copy of Gary Bossler's *NAPA: 1977-2007* from UW-Madison Special Collections Curator Robin E. Rider. I also received a kind holiday note from Ms. Rider advising me that she and her staff are making "steady progress in readying the LAJ for scholarly use." In early January, I mailed the 2007 AAPA and NAPA bundles (and the 2007 issues of *The National Amateur*) to UW-Madison for addition to LAJ. I will keep our readers advised of any further information received from UW-Madison.

UNKNOWING

Martha E. Shivvers

I do not know what weeds will grow
in the garden of my life.
But I can say, after night comes day
And laughter as well as strife.
I do not know why thistles grow
in pastures lush and green.
But I do know come rain or snow
there are beauties to be seen.
I do not know how God can bestow
the unloving with His love
But forgiving Grace for every race
does come from our Lord above.

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This journal is the Official Organ of The Fossils, 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, and mail to the Secretary-treasurer.