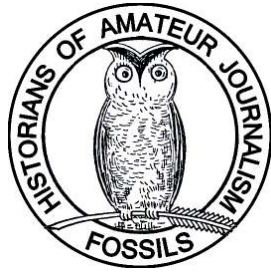


# The



# Fossil

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## Public Amateur Journal Collections

by David M. Tribby

IN THE JANUARY 2000 issue of *THE FOSSIL*, Ken Faig, then historian, described a survey of fifteen institutional libraries he believed maintained collections of amateur journals. He heard back from six, two of which turned out to have specialized collections (“girlzines” and college literary magazines). Ten years later he wrote “Institutional Collections of Amateur Journals” to update his work. This year I conducted my own survey, but instead of sending postal letters I searched the institutions’ websites. I started with libraries listed by Ken, or by Tom Parson in a report to the 2012 National Amateur Press Association convention. The following nine had an ajar connection that could be confirmed on the Web:

**University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis.:** The Fossils’ 2004 donation of the Library of Amateur Journalism has been covered extensively in *THE FOSSIL*. This is believed to be the largest ajar collection.

**American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.:** This research library of American history, literature, and culture holds about 55,000 amateur journalism items. They generally retain only material dated 1900 or earlier. Their website has an inventory of amateur newspapers.

**Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.:** The LoC online catalog briefly mentions “A large collection of amateur publications.” The Internet Archive includes links to 31 collections of LoC amateur journals, each holding 85 to 350 items. There are images of the first page of each item – over 6,700 images in total. Most of these papers date from the 1930s through the 1950s, with a number of earlier ones reaching into the

nineteenth century. The newest journal is dated January 1963.

**New York Public Library, New York City:** 18,000 items were donated by Charles W. “Tryout” Smith and others around 1939. A search for keyword “Amateur Press Association” turned up only fourteen items, although the subject “Amateur Journalism -- Periodicals” found two additional entries.

**University of California, Berkeley, Calif.:** The Bancroft Library purchased the Hyman Bradofsky Collection of over 7,000 items in 2003.

**University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa:** Their catalog provides excellent overviews of seven different collections related to amateur journalism.

**University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyo.:** The American Heritage Center has two collections (45 boxes total).

**Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio:** Warren J. Brodie donated approximately 15,000 papers in 1918. Only two entries for “amateur journalism --



Images of several 19th and early 20th century amateur journals from the Library of Congress.



More amateur journals from the Library of Congress

periodicals” appear in their catalog, although one delegate at the 2006 American Amateur Press Association convention described the collection as “a treasure trove.”

Yale University, New Haven, Conn.: A search for amateur periodicals returned 360 items published from 1845 to 1906.

This searching led me to WorldCat.org, a site that indexes holdings of libraries worldwide. Searching the subject “amateur journalism” turned up over 3,000 entries, almost half of them periodicals. Sifting through the WorldCat entries led to another major collection:

National Library of New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand: The Robert G. Barr Collection of Amateur Journalism contains over 1000 titles dating from 1880 to 1975.

WorldCat and other search resources revealed a number of smaller (or unspecified size) amateur journalism collections: Brooklyn Historical Society (Brooklyn, N.Y.), Connecticut Historical Society (Hartford, Conn.), Milwaukee County Historical Society (Milwaukee, Wis.), Northwestern University (Evanston, Ill.), Ohio University (Athens, Ohio), San Francisco Public Library (San Francisco, Calif.), Stanford University (Stanford, Calif.), University of California (Irvine, Calif.), University of Colorado (Boulder, Colo.), University of South Florida (Tampa, Fla.), and University of Utah (Salt Lake City, Utah). Some online descriptions are tantalizing (how many papers are included in Ohio University’s collection of NAPA mailings spanning 1889 to 2006?). I would welcome any reports of field trips that readers would like to submit.

You can view details of all these collections, with links, on [www.thefossils.org](http://www.thefossils.org). Follow the “Collections” link in the navigation bar, and be sure to check out the Library of Congress images on a separate page.

Based on known content, ajay materials are missing from some online catalogs. For example, the University of South Florida received the William Haywood collection in the 1990s, yet their catalog only lists two ajay publications (*Boxwooder* and *National Amateur*). Unfortunately, librarians have not responded to e-mail requests for clarification of their holdings.

No doubt there are collections at other institutions. If there is a library you want to check, visit their online catalog and look for subject headings containing “Amateur Journalism” or “Amateur Press Association.” Check for items in the classifications PN4825 through PN4830 (the Library of Congress Classification used by most academic libraries). Amateur journals are usually held in the Special Collections department. If you find more information on the collections listed above or identify a new collection, please contact me so they can be included on The Fossils’ website.

Before heading to a library, review its access policies. Often, materials held off site require an advance request of several days. Visitors may not be allowed to bring anything other than a pencil into the reading room.

Stanford University is nearby, so I planned a visit. Their catalog describes two ajay collections. The larger holds over 300 amateur papers (in four boxes) mostly published between 1890 and 1919. The smaller (two boxes) was donated by the family of Walter Radius, who published *The Newsboy* in San Francisco between 1892 and 1896. I used Stanford’s online paging system to have all six boxes brought to campus; I also received permission to bring my copy of Spencer’s *History of Amateur Journalism* in addition to a pencil, several sheets of paper, and a laptop.

I arrived in the Field Reading Room shortly after its 10 A.M. opening and soon was looking through the first box. Inside were five folders organized by state. After taking 90 minutes to browse the first folder (22 issues of 18 titles published in Alabama, Arizona, and California), I realized I needed to pick up the pace! Reviewing old controversies, getting a sense of early 20th century attitudes, finding a few familiar names, and studying the era’s typography was spellbinding. The Radius collection was more focused, showing the progress of a boy printer from age 13 to 17. *The Newsboy* grew from a tiny 2¼ by 2½ inch four pager to a multi-page 7 by 10 inch journal.

If you happen to be near a library with amateur journals, I encourage you to pay a visit – either to browse casually or to research a particular topic, era, or person. Not only will you connect with the past, but you will also show the library that these collections are used.

## Press On

by Gary Bossler

MY INTEREST IN amateur journalism was spurred by an old 7 x 11 inch old style Gordon press that made me think I could become a successful publisher and printer. A friend who was a printer purchased a shop and that Gordon had been a very small part of the purchase. The shop included a couple of model 1250 Addressograph-Multigraphs (popularly known as "Multi's"), a 17 x 22 Miller offset press plus a camera and plate making equipment. He had big ideas and went into debt for newer equipment: a 23 inch offset press, a 10 x 15 Heidelberg "Windmill," a new 30 inch Schneider power paper cutter, and a brand new Baum folder with a cross folding attachment. It wasn't long before he started to feel the pinch of his overhead and the Gordon and the Miller were the first to go. A year or so later, having been thoroughly bitten by the printing bug, I purchased one of his Multi's. It wasn't long before he went bankrupt and moved out of state.

That was over forty years ago and I've been dabbling ever since. I became a member of NAPA in 1972 and later joined AAPA and UAPA and then The Fossils. Though I have been President of both NAPA and The Fossils in the past, I don't seem to have the vision nor the gumption to pick up an organization like The Fossils and envision a way to keep it moving the way Guy Miller did. Having become a close friend of Guy's in recent years, I was well aware that he was the major mover and shaker in the organization. If we are to continue the aims of The Fossils, most importantly, to be the "historians of amateur journalism," we are going to need a lot of assistance in the area of people willing to stand up take and office for a couple of years. Currently we are looking for an official editor, an appointed office with a term of two years. Trustee Dave Tribby has been handling that job for the past several issues. And I have been handling getting it printed and mailed.

We have an election coming up. If you feel you could make a good trustee, by all means let Secretary-Treasurer Tom Parson know so we can place you on the ballot.

We have not given a "Russell Paxton Memorial Award for Service to Amateur Journalism" since 2011. This award has been generously provided by Trustee John Horn since its inception in 1986. Lee Hawes, who passed away last was chairman of this award committee. We need someone to chair this committee (the members of which he or she may choose) and search through the existing amateur press organizations for a deserving candidate.

We must press on and find those devotees who are willing to spend some of their time to help us keep amateur journalism alive and in the memories of those around us. ❖

## What Do You Want?

by David M. Tribby

IT HAS BEEN almost a year since I backed into the job of editing THE FOSSIL. After learning of the death of Lee Hawes last May, I asked Fossils President Jack Swenson if I could help the official editor put together an issue in his memory. I learned the editor's office was vacant (Trustee Gary Bossler filled in for two issues after Editor Ken Faig's term ended in July 2012). Jack gave the go-ahead for issue 356, which was mailed at the end of June 2013. Since no new editor stepped forward, I took on issue 357 and then committed to completing volume 110.

In addition to officers' reports and obituaries, I've tried to fill the pages with historical articles plus reports on current activities of ajay associations and libraries. Please let me know the type of articles you would like to see, and share any specific ideas for new articles.

Fred Liddle described official editor as the best office in amateur journalism. You get to practice our hobby of editing, writing, and publishing for the premier paper, and the association picks up the tab. I will gladly turn over volume 111 (first issue: October 2014) to someone willing to take on the job.

I completed my last term as an official editor, for AAPA, in 1979. Back then, the typed manuscripts and reports were sent to the printer, Russ Paxton, who Linotyped the text and mailed back two sets of galley proofs. One set was for correcting errors; the other was cut apart and laid out into pages. Russ needed everything back in enough time to complete the printing, binding, and shipping before the mailer's deadline. Now, articles and reports are e-mailed to me. I edit using a word processor (Word or LibreOffice). Scribus, a free program, does page layout and creates a PDF file. That file is sent to Gary Bossler, who gets it printed and then handles mailing.

For those interested in such details, the type face used in THE FOSSIL is Californian - 11 point for the body and larger sizes for headers. ❖

### Wanted:

#### Former United Members



The United Amateur Press and the United Amateur Press Association of America both ceased operation in the early twenty-first century. Official Editor Tribby plans to write an article about the Uniteds and would appreciate hearing from former members or others familiar with the groups' histories and final days. Please share your stories.

## With Our Members

- Former official editor (1996-97) **Don Peyer**, recently celebrated his 92nd birthday. He continues to write occasional articles for the Torrance, California, *Daily Breeze* – several of which are available online.
- All amateur journalists are invited to the San Francisco Bay Area Printers' Fair, to be held in San Jose on May 17. See [printersguild.wordpress.com](http://printersguild.wordpress.com) for details, and contact **Dave Tribby** ([dtribby@thefossils.org](mailto:dtribby@thefossils.org)) if you can attend.
- **Martha Shivvers**, membership chair from 1997 to 2012, celebrated her 99th birthday on February 13. She lives in an apartment adjacent to the country home of her son and daughter-in-law, Douglas and Carol, near Knoxville, Iowa. Martha's granddaughter, Dianna Shivvers, is working to compile a book of all of Martha's poems, including a number that appeared in THE FOSSIL. The book will be primarily for family members.
- This winter, President Gary Bossler kept busy assisting the family of a son who broke his femur in a skiing accident. The son's recovery has proceeded well. Gary's next project: helping to organize Ohio's Senior Olympics, to be held June 20-29 in Canton. ❖

## Secretary-Treasurer Report

by Tom Parson — March 31, 2014

INCLUSION OF A membership dues request in the January issue of THE FOSSIL was a proper success! We heard from twenty-two members who sent payment to update their membership.

Along with the renewals, we received a copy of *The Great Stereopticon*, issue seven, June 2013, with a nice note promising future AJ/zine activity, and membership payment from James N. Dawson of Spokane, Washington.

Additional zine periodicals have been received here from Dale Speirs of Alberta, Canada (*Opuntia* 273 for March 2014, the final print issue; future issues online at [www.efanzines.com](http://www.efanzines.com)), and from Robert Jennings of Oxford, Massachusetts (*Fadeaway* #40, the April-May 2014 issue, a fanzine devoted to science fiction).

Membership information is now being recorded and kept up-to-date via Google docs. Thanks to Gary Bossler and Dave Tribby! We would love to update our records there now with your membership renewal.

### Financial details:

- PNC Bank statement, March 31, 2014, total of \$7,003.75 (includes new deposit of \$310.)
- One payment check for internet service, not yet processed by the bank: -\$24.95
- Total currently available: \$6978.80 ❖

## 2014 Election Procedure

THE FOSSILS HOLDS its elections in even numbered years, so nominations are now in order. Members elect the Board of Trustees, who in turn appoint the other officers: official editor, secretary-treasurer, historian, librarian, and webmaster. The three trustees select one of their own as president. Because the president carries over to the next term, only two trustees are elected by the membership. Any proposed amendments to the by-laws would also be voted on in the election.

Any member who wants to run for office should file with Secretary-Treasurer Parson no later than June 30. Amendments, proposed by five members, must be submitted to President Bossler no later than June 10. Ballots will be mailed to members by the secretary-treasurer by July 10 and must be returned no later than July 31. The new term of office begins on August 15.

Back in 2012, only two candidates filed for the two positions and there were no amendments. President Guy Miller proposed the election be canceled and the two candidates appointed as trustees, in order to save postage and effort. The incumbent board and officers all agreed with the proposal. ❖

## The Fossil

THIS IS THE Official Publication of The Fossils, a non-profit organization of those interested in the history of amateur journalism. Individuals or institutions allied with our goals are invited to join. Dues are \$15 annually, or \$20 for joint membership of husband and wife. Annual subscription to THE FOSSIL without privileges of membership is \$10. For further information, visit our website:

[www.thefossils.org](http://www.thefossils.org)

Gathering of articles, editing, and page layout were done by Dave Tribby in California; production and mailing were handled by Gary Bossler in Ohio.

### Fossil Board: 2012 - 2014

Gary Bossler, PRESIDENT, 145 Genoa Avenue S.W., Massillon, OH 44646; [president@thefossils.org](mailto:president@thefossils.org)

John Horn, 24300 Chenal Parkway, #71, Little Rock, AR 72223; [jhorn@thefossils.org](mailto:jhorn@thefossils.org)

David M. Tribby, 1529 Fantail Court, Sunnyvale, CA 94087; [dtribby@thefossils.org](mailto:dtribby@thefossils.org)

### Appointed Officers

Secretary-Treasurer: Tom Parson, 157 South Logan Street, Denver, CO 80209; [s-t@thefossils.org](mailto:s-t@thefossils.org)

Librarian: Sean Donnelly, University of Tampa Press, 401 W. Kennedy Blvd., Tampa, FL 33606; [librarian@thefossils.org](mailto:librarian@thefossils.org)

Webmaster: David M. Tribby (contact information above)

Official Editor: David M. Tribby (contact information above)