

# The Fossil

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## Amateur Journalism Conference 2016

by Dave Tribby

IN THE JULY 2015 ISSUE OF *THE FOSSIL*, President Ken Faig suggested amateur journalism groups should meet at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, home of the Library of Amateur Journalism (LAJ), to mark the one hundredth anniversary of the purchase of the collection by *The Fossils* from its originator, Edwin Hadley Smith. (The *Fossils* turned the LAJ over to UW-Madison in 2004.) When he visited the LAJ two months earlier, he was impressed with the dedication of the staff in maintaining it, and they reacted enthusiastically to the idea of an amateur journalism conference. The National Amateur Press Association (NAPA) voted to hold their 2016 convention in Madison, and appointed Arie Koelewyn chairman of the Convention Reception Committee. The American APA designated Amateur Journalism Conference 2016 an official regional meeting, with Barry Schrader in charge of AAPA arrangements.

Ben Strand, Director of Development for UW-Madison Libraries, was the main contact for the University. He arranged use of three Memorial Library rooms clustered in the northwest corner of the building (a main meeting room, a smaller room for NAPA business sessions, and a small auditorium for presentations), located close to a convenient side entrance. He also arranged for special room rates at the Lowell Inn and Conference Center, about one block east of the library.

In the months leading up to the conference, the planning team exchanged dozens of e-mail messages as they hammered out a schedule and other arrangements that worked for all organizations. NAPA meets for three days, so the conference would start on Thursday, July 21. AAPA would arrive on Friday, for two days. Both APAs would hold their organization-specific meetings early in the day, with the joint conference sessions afterward.

NAPA members began arriving by car and airplane on Wednesday, July 20. As they gathered in the lobby to make plans for dinner, they received disappointing news: Jake Warner had broken his heel on Monday and could not make the trip to

Madison — the first time he had missed an NAPA convention since 1971. Jake's son (David Warner), granddaughter (Alice Brosey), and great-grandson (Elijah Brosey) also would not make the trip.

*Thursday, July 21*

The first official event of the conference was the **Opening Session of the 141st NAPA Convention**. Ben Strand and Ken Faig welcomed ten NAPA delegates to the conference. President Michelle Klosterman gavelled the meeting to order at 9:20 AM and efficiently moved through the order of business specified in the by-laws, completing the "First Day" agenda of appointments and reports in about an hour. There were hopeful signs in Secretary-Treasurer Boys' reports: membership held steady (if trial members are included) and, thanks to low expenses by Official Editor David Warner, income was greater than expenses.

In order to keep Friday available for conference presentations, NAPA continued with its "Second Day" agenda after a half hour recess. Elections produced the following results: President: Michelle Klosterman; Vice President: Jim Hedges; Secretary-Treasurer (2 year term): Bill Boys; Official Editor: election postponed;



*The opening NAPA session: Hal Shive, Tom Parson, George Hamilton, Bill Boys, Dave Tribby, Kay Schrader, Michelle Klosterman, Arie Koelewyn, and Lisa Brandstetter Holt. Photo by Barry Schrader.*

Recorder: Hazel Cuadrado; Executive Judge (3 year term): Lisa Brandstetter Holt; 2017 Convention City: Carson, CA; 2018 Convention City: Ashtabula, OH. Following the elections, Dave Tribby introduced a resolution drafted by Peter Schaub (who would not arrive until later) calling for the donation of \$5,000 from NAPA's treasury to support the Library of Amateur Journalism; \$2,000 for the current work of cataloging and preservation and \$3,000 for the Leland M. Hawes endowment fund. Discussion followed, with delegates voting to table the decision until after the LAJ open house on Friday afternoon. The session closed about 12:20.

As delegates left the building, they found a weather pattern had brought warm, humid air to the area. The high temperature of 94 was ten degrees warmer than Wednesday's.

Later in the afternoon, those who had items for the auction returned to Memorial Library and put them on display in the main meeting room.

Around 6 PM, 14 amateurs made the two-block walk from the Lowell Center to The Madison Blind for dinner. The seventh-story restaurant provided a view of Lake Mendota to the north and the dome at the state capitol to the east. Both disappeared as an intense rainstorm arrived. (Cell phones rang with severe weather warnings.) After the meal, Barry Schrader called his wife Kay (who had not come to dinner) and had her bring their car to the restaurant so he could shuttle people back to Lowell.

### Friday, July 22

AAPA members gathered in the main meeting room beginning at 8:30 AM for the **AAPA Opening Session**. There was informal socializing until 9:15, when Presi-

dent Peter Schaub thanked the group for attending the conference. Ben Strand offered a welcome from UW, spoke about the LAJ, and introduced Arielle Perry, who described how the Friends of the UW-Madison Libraries support a number of programs, including acquisitions, visiting scholars, and community events (such as the conference).

In brief remarks about the AAPA's future, President Schaub wondered how the group might engage with the zine community, considering the similar interests. The session concluded with each member giving a brief introduction.

AAPA members moved to the auditorium where others joined them for the opening conference presentations.

Susan Barribeau, UW-Madison English Language Humanities Librarian and Literary Collections Curator, spoke about UW's **Little Magazine Collection**. The collection, which holds 7,500 English language literary magazines (over 1,000 different titles) from many countries, is the largest of its type. They recently began digitizing parts of the collection that are in the public domain. The boundaries between little magazines, zines, and amateur journals is not distinct; rather, the various types of publications fall on a spectrum. Zines tend to be more graphic (perhaps cartoonish) or feature personal/confessional writing. Hyman Bradofsky's amateur journal from the 1930s, *The Californian*, is included in their collection because of its strong literary content.



Susan Barribeau

The next presentation, **The Library of Amateur Journalism**, had three parts. Ken Faig led off by describing the history of the LAJ from the 1890s when E. H. Smith began acquiring old amateur journals, through the purchase of the collection by The Fossils in 1916, and on to its donation to UW-Madison Special Collections in 2004. (For details, see Ken's "A Brief History of the LAJ" in the July 2016 issue of THE FOSSIL.)

Robin Rider, Memorial Library Curator of Special Collections, described the job of organizing the LAJ. The hundreds of cartons that arrived in Madison were a mixture of sorted and miscellaneous items. Components included over 450 volumes bound by E. H. Smith through 1943, sorted loose journals from later periods, books, photographs, scrapbooks, and a large volume of material



Robin Rider

## Conference Attendance

(Affiliation code: F = The Fossils; A = AAPA; N = NAPA; W = University of Wisconsin.)

THOSE IN ATTENDANCE at Amateur Journalism Conference 2016: Susan Barribeau (W), Bill & Ruth Boys (F, N), John Carvalho & Joe Palmer (A), Mike Coughlin (A), Jim & Nancy Dast (W), Linda K. Donaldson (F), Ken & Carol Faig (F), George Hamilton (F, N, A), Kim Hamilton (A), Lisa Brandstetter Holt (N), Tracy Honn (W), Derrick Hussey & Anastasia Damiankos, Jessica Isaac & Justin Sevenker, S. T. Joshi & Mary Wilson, Matthew Lewis (W), Michelle Klosterman (N), Arie Koelewyn & Kate Corby (N, A), Dave Lubker, Keith, Dayne, & Alyse Miller, Russell & Delores Miller (A), Emmett Mottl (W), Dwayne Olson, Tom Parson (F, N, A), Erica Perrin (W), Arielle Perry (W), Robin Rider (W), James Roberts, Peter E. Schaub (F, N, A), Barry & Kay Schrader (F, N, A), David & Gail Schultz, Harold Shive (N), Ben Strand (W), Susan Stravinski (W), Dave & Liz Tribby (F, N, A), Phyllis Weisbard (W), Lisa Wettleson (W), and Clarence Wolfshohl (A).

rescued from Willametta and Martin Keffer's home following their deaths. If materials produced before 1922 (now in the public domain) were to be digitized, it would be necessary to first de-bind the volumes, spray them to de-acidify, save them in acid-free folders, and record cataloging information; estimated cost is about \$1,000 per volume. She sees a strong potential for scholarly research in a number of areas, such as print culture, A. J. politics, genealogy, local history, and regionalism. The LAJ fits very well with the library's other collections.

Jessica Isaac, currently the Program and Curriculum Director at Books@Work in Cleveland, learned of nineteenth century amateur journalism while a doctoral student studying youth history. Her research showed that amateur journalism was an important part of the



Jessica Isaac

emergence of adolescence after the Civil War. She researched several significant collections of amateur papers, and spent a month studying the LAJ in 2013. She had to deal with a large amount of data, and created graphs to show both yearly publishing trends and differences in data among the various collections. By classifying papers published in two states during 1878-79, then looking up the families in the 1880 census records, she determined which classes of amateurs took their printing and writing more seriously. She gained a deeper understanding of amateur journalists by using letterpress equipment at the Silver

Buckle Press (then located in Memorial Library) to recreate a page from an 1879 paper.

The three panelists reinforced the importance of the LAJ, and how well the University has been taking care of it.

Everyone returned to the main meeting room to eat sandwiches at **The Fossils' Luncheon**. President Faig briefly interrupted the socializing to announce that Mike Horvat had been awarded the 2016 Russell L. Paxton Award for Service to Amateur Journalism.

After lunch, people took the Memorial Library elevator up to the ninth floor, home of the Special Collections department, for the **Exhibit of the Library of Amateur Journalism**. Although only staff members are allowed into the vault holding LAJ materials, they had brought a significant number of items up to a viewing room. Included on the display tables were several of the E. H. Smith volumes of amateur papers and memorabilia, loose journals filed in folders, books, photographs, and a small printing press. Library staff explained the items and answered questions.

People made their way back to the main meeting room to look over items in the **Amateur Journalism Auction**. Due to a crowded schedule, there wasn't time for the usual format of an auctioneer soliciting bids from the crowd; instead, each item had a sheet to record bids placed by individuals, with bidding closing at 4:30. There were dozens of items, including many letterpress-related items donated by Barry Schrader. The auction raised a total of \$923: \$685 for items earmarked for AAPA, \$165 for The Fossils, and \$73 for NAPA. AAPA announced before the auction that all of its proceeds would be donated to the Hawes endowment fund. (Later, the Fossil board voted to do likewise.)

*The Library of Amateur Journalism Open House...*



Library staff put a variety of LAJ materials on display.

Left: Ruth & Bill Boys and Jessica Isaac.

Below: George Hamilton, Robin Rider, Dave Tribby, Linda Donaldson, Liz Tribby, Michael Coughlin, and Tom Parson.



*Saturday, July 23*

Because Memorial Library does not open until 10 AM on Saturdays and NAPA delegates wanted to minimize overlap with the morning AAPA panels, NAPA met in the hospitality suite beginning at 9 for the **NAPA Convention Third Session**. With a report that incumbent editor David Warner had reluctantly agreed to continue in office, he was re-elected. (A few days later, Gary Bossler volunteered to serve as editor, so David resigned and Gary succeeded him.) Turning to LAJ support, Secretary-Treasurer Boys had drafted a substitute resolution that modified the timing of the donation to coincide with CD maturity dates (Sept. 30), left the amounts to be given open for discussion, and endorsed a matching gift program. The ori-

ginal resolution was withdrawn in favor of the new one. With the auction proceeds, the Hawes fund needed about \$3,000 to reach the \$10,000 minimum to become an official UW Foundation endowment, so that amount was voted in. After a bit of discussion, the amount to support ongoing work was set at \$2,000. Bill Boys invited others to join him in pledging funds to match gifts from other members, and two more agreed. Those pledging matching funds are Bill & Ruth Boys, \$3,000; George Hamilton, \$1,000; and Barry & Kay Schrader, \$500. Other business matters handled at the session included additional reports and announcements.

At 10:20, the AAPA held a panel on **Late Greats in Amateur Journalism**, in which Barry Schrader, Dave



Opening slide for "Late Greats" presentation

meticulously researched and printed quarterly, before his death in 2001. Charlie Hinde was a life-long printer who put together his retirement printshop in the 1970s. Lee Hawes published a variety of authors in his *Gator Growl*, and was known as "Mr. AAPA" since the 1960s for taking on many tasks that kept the organization alive. Mischievous Roy Lindberg once published forged copies of other people's journals. Les Boyer used his organization skills to spearhead four major recruiting campaigns between 1970 and 1982 that brought 325 recruits into AAPA. Fred Liddle published over 1,000 issues of *Flimsie Excuse*. Helen & Sheldon Wesson, who met in the hobby, won numerous awards for printing and writing. Charlie Bush gained national recognition for pointing out a spelling error in the title of the *St. Joseph Gazette*. J. Hill Hamon, a biology professor, kept a printing press in his office. Barry also talked about Mike O'Connor, not late but still a legend.

For the second AAPA panel of the morning, Russell and Delores Miller and their son Keith shared stories of their life **Down on the Farm** near Hortonville, Wisconsin. As a special treat to those in attendance, the Millers brought delicious "squeaky" cheese curds that had



Keith, Russell, and Delores Miller

Tribby, and George Hamilton shared stories about several outstanding amateur journalists no longer with us. Fred Williams published 100 issues of *Type & Press*, a

meticulously researched and printed quarterly, before his death in 2001. Charlie Hinde was a life-long printer who put together his retirement printshop in the 1970s. Lee Hawes published a variety of authors in his *Gator Growl*, and was known as "Mr. AAPA" since the 1960s for taking on many tasks that kept the organization alive. Mischievous Roy Lindberg once published forged copies of other people's journals. Les Boyer used his organization skills to spearhead four major recruiting campaigns between 1970 and 1982 that brought 325 recruits into AAPA. Fred Liddle published over 1,000 issues of *Flimsie Excuse*. Helen & Sheldon Wesson, who met in the hobby, won numerous awards for printing and writing. Charlie Bush gained national recognition for pointing out a spelling error in the title of the *St. Joseph Gazette*. J. Hill Hamon, a biology professor, kept a printing press in his office. Barry also talked about Mike O'Connor, not late but still a legend. The five Miller children learned to become useful from an early age, starting with picking rocks.

They helped with the milking, although Russ had his favorite cows that nobody else was allowed to handle. Bailing hay was a particularly exhausting chore, and had to be done on the warmest days. The farm life instilled values of working hard and doing the job right.



George Hamilton, Bill Boys, Arie Koelewyn, and Dave Tribby

In the first panel of the afternoon, Dave Tribby, Arie Koelewyn, Bill Boys, and George Hamilton discussed **Letterpress Printing and Amateur Journalism**. They described the process of writing an article, setting it into type, proofing the form, locking it up, setting up the press, and doing the press run. They described how other hobby printers inspired their work.

The final conference panel, **H. P. Lovecraft & Amateur Journalism**, brought together S. T. Joshi and David

E. Schultz (co-editors of 15 volumes of Lovecraft letters) with Ken Faig, Jr., who has written multiple essays on the author.



S. T. Joshi, Ken Faig, and David E. Schultz

Lovecraft wrote for the love of writing, so he was a true amateur. At age 12 he had his own printing press. He joined the United APA in 1914, and NAPA in 1917, although he wasn't active in the latter group until later. Amateur journalism provided a venue to an appreciative audience for the first time, and brought him out of a mostly solitary existence. He said that amateur journalism "gave me life itself." His strong opinions about the role of amateur journalism brought him into conflict with some other amateurs. He promoted self improvement, rather than having fun, as the main purpose of the hobby. Amateur journalism taught him about personal relationships; he joined the local Providence Amateur Press Club, and found his wife at a 1921 UAPA convention. (They were married in 1924, but separated in 1925.) Among his most important influences were amateurs Rheinehart Kleiner, W. Paul Cook, and James F. Morton. After his branch of UAPA dissolved in the mid-1920s, he became more active in NAPA. He served

on the Bureau of Critics from 1931–35. As an Executive Judge in 1936 he spent many hours resolving conflicts among amateurs.

At the conclusion of the panels, people took a break and returned to the Lowell Center.

They came back outside Memorial Library for a **Group Photo** at 5:30. Due to a threat of showers the picture was taken inside. The group then dodged raindrops as they walked across the street to the Pyle Center for a **Social Hour Reception** and then the **Wisconsin Choice Buffet Dinner**. The dining room, on the edge of Lake Mendota, provided a spectacular view as another strong storm moved through. Following the meal, which was attended by 33 people, Rev. Bill Boys offered a word of thanks. Dave Tribby introduced Jessica Isaac, who delivered the **Keynote Presentation**, "The Early Years of Amateur Journalism." In the decades following the Civil War, editing and printing a paper had widespread appeal for young people, and Amateurdome became an important expression of youth culture. Dr. Isaac included stories of individual amateurs of the 1870s and 1880s, including Frank Baum, eventual author of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

At the conclusion of Jessica's presentation, the presidents of the organizations spoke. Fossils' President Faig thanked the Lovecraft panel for their participation, and noted that their publisher, Derrick Hussey of Hippocampus Press, was in attendance. He thanked a number of people for making the conference a success: the UW staff, particularly Ben Strand and Erica Perrin, for many months of conference preparations; Special Collections librarians Robin Rider and Susan Stravinsky for the excellent display of LAJ materials; the Friends of



Three Presidents: Peter Schaub (AAPA), Michelle Klosterman (NAPA), and Ken Faig (Fossils)



Rows 1 and 2: Carol Faig, Liz Tribby, Ben Strand, Susan Stravinsky, Linda Donaldson, Lisa Brandstetter Holt, Bill Boys, Ruth Boys; 3rd: Arie Koelewyn, S. T. Joshi; 4th: Joe Palmer, Tom Parson, Kim Hamilton, Dave Tribby; 5th: Clarence Wolfshohl, Jessica Isaac, John Carvalho, Harold Shive; 6th: Justin Sevenker, Barry Schrader, George Hamilton

the Library for their assistance with conference logistics; to the many student volunteers for helping out as needed, and to the amateur journalists on the conference planning committee.

AAPA President Schaub noted how pleased he was with the donations that will support the LAJ.

NAPA President Klosterman thanked UW for inviting NAPA to hold its convention in conjunction with the conference. She announced the winners of the 2016 Laureate Awards, then turned the microphone over to Arie Koelewyn to read several resolutions.

After the conclusion of the after-dinner program, conversations continued in the dining room. As people left the Pyle Center, they found the storm had passed. Many said their farewells either that evening or after breakfast the next morning.

On Sunday, three delegates (Linda Donaldson, George Hamilton, and Clarence Wolfshohl) made the 140 mile trip to Two Rivers, Wisconsin, to tour the Hamilton Wood Type & Printing Museum. ♦



Conference photos used in this issue taken by Barry Schrader, Peter Schaub, and Dave Tribby.

## Two Milestones

by Ken Faig, Jr.

### Amateur Journalism Conference – July 21-23, 2016

AFTER MANY MONTHS of planning, this event, co-sponsored by AAPA, NAPA, The Fossils, and University of Wisconsin Libraries, finally transpired. The weather was brutally hot and humid for the three days of the conference, but the registrants did not allow the weather to dampen their enthusiasm for the conference events and the opportunities for socializing. On Thursday and Friday nights, Barry Schrader hosted a hospitality suite for conference registrants at Lowell Inn.



UW-Madison provided ample facilities for the conference. The hard work that Ben Strand and Erica Perin of the UW Foundation devoted to the entire planning process was evident throughout. I am also grateful to the other members of the planning committee for the conference—Arie Koelewyn, Barry Schrader, and David Tribby. AAPA President Peter Schaub and NAPA President Michelle Klosterman also participated in the planning process.

Friday events included a complimentary luncheon provided by The Fossils and a silent auction of amateur journalism books, magazines, and equipment.

During the luncheon, I had the honor to announce Fossils librarian Martin M. “Mike” Horvat as 2016 winner of the Russell L. Paxton Memorial Award for Service to Amateur Journalism, sponsored by Fossils trustee John Horn. Since Mike was not present at the conference, John mailed Mike’s plaque to him. Without Mike’s dedicated twenty-five year curatorship of the LAJ Collection from 1980 to 2004, we would not have the collection intact today at UW-Madison.



The auction raised \$685 for AAPA, \$73 for NAPA, and \$165 for The Fossils. Barry Schrader worked especially hard to assure the success of the auction. If we had had room in the schedule for a “live” auction with George Hamilton as our auctioneer, we would probably have raised even more money.

The Friday afternoon exhibit of sample materials from the LAJ Collection mounted by Special Collections curator Robin Rider and her staff was a highlight of the conference and provided many registrants with a “first look” at the collection. UW staff also participated in other parts of the program. Robin Rider participated

with our keynote speaker Jessica Isaac and me in a panel devoted to the LAJ Collection. Susan Barribeau gave a fascinating presentation on UW-Madison’s related “little magazines” collection. In addition to the LAJ Collection, UW-Madison is also home to the Ralph A. L. Breed collection of British amateur journals.

AAPA’s Barry Schrader helped to mount two very interesting Saturday morning panels—one devoted to “ajay greats” and the second a presentation by Russ and Delores Miller and their son Keith. The Millers brought Wisconsin cheese curds for all the attendants to enjoy. Their story certainly exemplifies lives well-lived.

On Saturday afternoon, Arie Koelewyn moderated a panel on letterpress printing in the amateur journalism hobby. The final Saturday afternoon panel, which I moderated, covered the subject of H. P. Lovecraft and amateur journalism. We were fortunate to get S. T. Joshi and David E. Schultz, editors of the Lovecraft letters and fiction for Hippocampus Press, as panelists. Messrs. Joshi and Schultz and their publisher Derrick Hussey, together with their spouses, also joined us for our Saturday evening banquet.

For the banquet, UW-Madison provided us with an excellent menu served in the main dining room of Pyle Center, overlooking the lake. The dining room provided a memorable setting for our event as storms built outside. Bill Boys began the after-dinner events with a prayer of thanks for the privilege of our gathering together. Then our keynote speaker Jessica Isaac, Ph.D., delivered a fascinating and well-illustrated presentation on the youth culture of nineteenth-century amateur journalism. Jessica took questions following her talk. Hopefully, Jessica represents the vanguard of the scholars who will use the LAJ Collection during the next one hundred years. UW Foundation’s Ben Strand, Special Collections curator Robin Rider, Special Collections staff member Susan Stravinski, and UW graduate Emmett Motti joined us for the banquet. UW volunteers including Emmett helped us with the conference registration, setup for The Fossils luncheon, and security while our silent auction items were on display for bidding.

I’m grateful to our Fossils board for authorizing the expenditure of \$500 for the conference. This money was divided approximately 50/50 for The Fossils’ share of our support for our keynote speaker and the complimentary Fossils’ luncheon. I’m also grateful to AAPA President Peter Schaub and to NAPA President Michelle Klosterman for agreeing to hold meetings of their organizations in conjunction with the conference. The conference could not have succeeded without the support of AAPA and NAPA.

Of course, a brief summary can only provide a hint of the friendships renewed and the information garnered from the conference. Hopefully, even Edwin Hadley Smith, not an easy man to please, would agree that his LAJ Collection has finally attained the permanent home for which he had hoped. One dramatic development during the conference was David Tribby's introduction of a resolution for LAJ Collection funding in the NAPA business meeting. Since David was so instrumental in promoting LAJ Collection funding during the conference, I will defer to him to provide an up-to-date description of what was achieved.

Needless to say, as Fossils president I continue to support the important goals of establishing an endowment fund (Hawes Fund) for the LAJ Collection and continuing to fund ongoing cataloging, conservation, and development of the collection. It would be wonderful if the cataloging of the LAJ Collection could be completed within the next decade. With the help of institutional funding, perhaps significant portions of the collection, especially the fragile Edwin Hadley Smith bound volumes, could be digitized in the coming years. The possibilities for the LAJ Collection are exciting to contemplate. I am confident that the collection will be a rich resource, both for scholars and for hobbyists, in the years to come.

Overall, I thought we had a memorable celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of Charles C. Heuman's acquisition of the LAJ Collection on behalf of The Fossils. I hope that the next one hundred years of the LAJ Collection will be even richer than its first one hundred years. It is possible that other conferences centered on the LAJ Collection will convene at UW-Madison in future years. I hope the amateur journalism hobby will continue to evolve in future years, and that both scholars and active amateur journalists will convene in Madison to celebrate the two hundred fiftieth anniversary of the hobby in 2126. Expressing one's thoughts in permanent form is a great privilege for the ordinary citizen—a privilege which we should not allow to perish in a free society.

### *Another Centenary—October 11, 2016*

In some respects, a book is like a child for its author.

October 11, 2016 will mark the centenary of the publication of Edith Miniters' novel *Our Natupski Neighbors* by Henry Holt of New York. Despite garnering over two hundred generally favorable reviews, Mrs. Miniters' novel did not sell well enough to warrant any further publication of her work by Holt. Only small fragments of her anticipated *Natupski* sequel survive, but more significant fragments of two other novels, *Lydia 'n Gerald* and *The Village Green*, survive in manuscript in the Lovecraft Collection at Brown University and were published by Hippocampus Press under the title of the latter novel in 2013. Like *Natupski*, *Lydia 'n Gerald* is largely episodic, and contains the poignant story of a deserted mother (Lydia) struggling to raise her son (Gerald) in poverty. *The Village Green*,

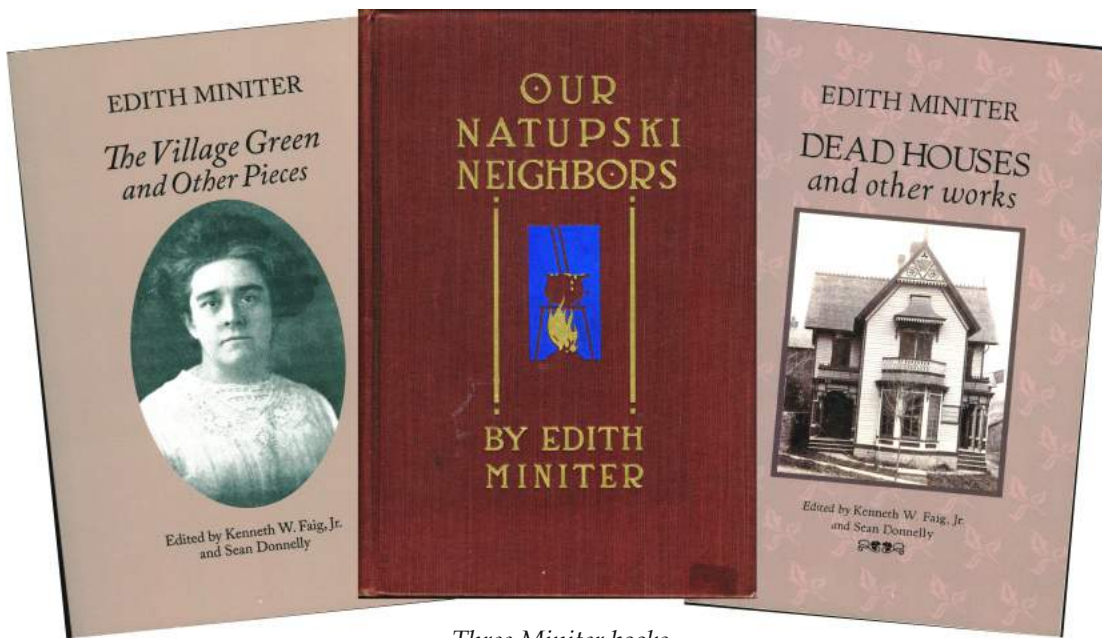
by way of contrast, contains a carefully crafted fictionalized portrait of the doings of Boston's Hub amateur journalists' club in Mrs. Miniters' day. Yet a third novel fragment, *Love Without Wings*, first published in installments by Mrs. Miniters in her amateur journal *The Varied Year* between 1902 and 1910 and reprinted in *The Village Green*, is an almost painfully frank, but sometimes amusing portrait of Mrs. Miniters' troubled marriage to John Miniters, which ended in separation in 1891.



*Edith Miniters*

But it is really Mrs. Miniters' short fiction that was shortchanged by the publishers of her day. For forty some years, she published short stories mirroring the New England life of her day in amateur magazines. She published a few of her stories in professional magazines, but no publisher ever took up a collection of her short fiction, until Hippocampus Press published *Dead Houses* in 2008. W. Paul Cook considered the title story Mrs. Miniters' masterpiece, and was enraged when Robert H. Barlow first published it in a small-circulation mimeographed magazine (*Leaves*) in 1938. A printer by profession, Cook scorned the mimeograph and the spirit duplicator. For myself, I have other favorite Miniters stories in *Dead Houses* and *The Village Green*. There is probably even room for yet a third collection embracing Mrs. Miniters' short fiction. Sean Donnelly and I (co-editors of the two Miniters collections from Hippocampus Press) had hoped that the 2016 centenary of *Our Natupski Neighbors* would motivate an academic scholar to undertake a new, critical edition of that work, but our hopes were not realized. Nevertheless, *Natupski* remains available for reading, both for free on Google Books and in reprint editions from Kessinger and other publishers. *Natupski* was controversial in Mrs. Miniters' Wilbraham, Massachusetts birthplace not so much for its portrayal of the immigrant Polish family (whose actual surname was Nietupski), but for its frank portrayal of the "native" residents. Whether any interest in Mrs. Miniters and her work will eventually emerge from her native place remains to be seen.

Mrs. Miniters' short fiction—which from my perspective includes the largely independent chapters of *Our Natupski Neighbors* and *Lydia 'n Gerald*—is always poignant, sometimes very dark. In "Whence Come These Blooms?" from *Our Natupski Neighbors*, Kani's daughter Novia lovingly tends a field of poppies that she believes her father has planted to beautify his farm, only to receive a beating from her father when a detective who discovers his real purpose (sale of the poppy crop as opioids) forces him to plow under his anticipated profits. In Chapter XIII ("Those Hellion Students") of *Lydia 'n Gerald*, Lydia's new flagstone in-



Three Minter books

stalled by student volunteers proves to be a pilfered gravestone. In "A Tragedy of the Hills," a very early (1891), very dark story reprinted in *Dead Houses*, spinster Mercy Webster's manager Lucious Benton lets her drown in an old doorside well for the sake of the summer's profits. It is only a pity that classic stories like "The Emancipation of Elvira" (also reprinted in *Dead Houses*), in which the protagonist contemplates the murder of her neglectful husband, were never taken up by anthologists. It remains my hope that Edith Minter will eventually occupy her own small niche in the domain of New England regionalists, with Sarah Ornet Jewett, Mary Wilkins Freeman, and others.

For amateur journalists, of course, Edith Minter (1867-1934) was the central figure of Boston's Hub Club for thirty-some years (1893-1924), until she retired to her native Wilbraham in western Massachusetts to spend her declining years in the home of her remote relation Evanore Beebe. She had the additional distinction of being the first woman to be president of NAPA (1909-10). She did not have a happy term in office. The New York amateurs refused to be active, and she had to fire Victor Singer as treasurer and George Julian Houtain as official editor for neglect of their official duties. Over the years, she continued to insist that her friend (and probable lover) John Leary Peltret be placed on the NAPA presidential roll after being cheated of election in 1902 because of rejected proxies. Anthony E. Wills, the elected president for the 1902-03 term, continued to insist that his name be dropped if that of Mr. Peltret was enrolled, and NAPA declined to accede to Mrs. Minter's wishes. Similarly, she led Boston's Hub Club in the 1910-11 effort to have Fossils leaders Heuman, Kempner, and Miller expelled from NAPA for advocating the exclusion of adults from the hobby. The NAPA convention wisely followed the advice of executive judge Walter "Pop" Mellinger, who opined that Heuman, Kempner, and Miller had been

punished enough by the criticism they incurred for their position.

Rumors swirled that Mrs. Minter and Mr. Peltret could not wed because she had a husband locked away in a madhouse. The truth was that Mrs. Minter's estranged husband John, with whom she had published *The Webster Amateur* in the year of their marriage (1887), had died of alcoholism in 1900. It was apparently Mr. Peltret who was not free to marry.

Since she had no children of her own, *Our Natupski Neighbors* (1916) remains Mrs. Minter's best-known legacy. Like her short stories

and her other episodic novel *Lydia 'n Gerald*, it remains a work which rewards reading and rereading.

I hope I have not been too selfish in writing this brief memorial of Mrs. Minter and her work for publication in THE FOSSIL on the centenary of the publication of her novel. If it is our charge as Fossils to remember the history of our hobby, we should not allow the memory of Mrs. Minter and her rich work to fall into oblivion. I think that *Dead Houses* and *The Village Green* represent, at present, the best hope for the preservation of Mrs. Minter's work for posterity. The two Minter collections that I produced in 100-copy editions for my own Moshassuck Press with support from Hyman Bradofsky and Ralph Babcock (*Going Home* in 1995 and *The Coast of Bohemia* in 2000) will remain mostly of archival interest. Copies show up from time to time at amateur auctions because Messrs. Bradofsky and Babcock generously sent the copies they purchased to fellow amateurs. As a seven-pound hardbound tome *The Coast of Bohemia* has not proved very saleable. The bookseller who purchased most of my library in 2013-14 has cut the price (originally \$100) all the way to \$35 without finding many buyers. Of the two copies that reached the silent auction in Madison—both offered for a minimum bid of \$1—one was given away and the other had to be taken home for another day. But the matter of Edith May (Dowe) Minter and her literary legacy has always been a matter of "certain ideals," as she would have put it, rather than a matter of money.

I, for one, remain grateful that Finlay Arnon Grant's twenty five-cent advertisement for the amateur journalism hobby came to her attention, and that she attended her first amateur journalism convention as a young lady of sixteen years in her then home of Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1883. What a wonderful legacy we continue to enjoy as a result of her recruitment for our hobby! ♦



## Horvat Receives Paxton Award

FOSSILS PRESIDENT Ken Faig sent the following letter to Martin "Mike" Horvat:

*I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you upon your selection as the 2016 recipient of the Russell L. Paxton Memorial Award for Service to Amateur Journalism. The handsome plaque sponsored by John Horn is enclosed with this letter. We plan to make a public announcement of your award at the Fossils' luncheon at the Amateur Journalism Conference being held at UW-Madison on July 22, 2016.*



Martin "Mike" Horvat

*Fossils President E. Sherman Cole and his board in retrospect made a very wise decision in entrusting the Library of Amateur Journalism collection to your care in 1980. Your efforts in recovering portions of the collection from subcontractors of the bankrupt microfilming contractor went way beyond the call of duty and ensured the preservation of the collection intact. You provided space in your home and rented space in the Paris Mill for the collection over a period of nearly twenty-five years. You maintained memberships in virtually all amateur press organizations so that the LAJ collection could continue to be a complete record of the hobby. You and Stan Oliner devoted a week of your lives to packing and shipping the recoverable portions of the Keffer collection. Finally, in 2003, when notified that the Paris Mill would soon be demolished, you coordinated with the Fossils' LAJ Committee to find a new home for the collection. You managed the loading and packing of the collection for shipment to Madison.*

*You served the National Amateur Press Association as official editor in 1981-82 and as president in 1986-87. In addition, your activities as a collector benefitted the University of Iowa as well as UW-Madison. Your fanzine, genzine, NFFF and science fiction convention memorabilia collections enriched the collections at University of Iowa. As a result of your generosity, Iowa will be a magnet for fans and scholars wishing to research amateur publishing in the science fiction and fantasy fields. In addition, a significant portion of the current Fossils website owes its existence to your efforts.*

*Again, my congratulations to you and all your family on this important recognition of your lifetime service to the amateur journalism hobby. The Fossils thank you for all your efforts on behalf of the amateur journalism hobby. We hope that your Paxton award provides some recognition of your contribution. We think that Edwin Hadley Smith and Russ Paxton would approve of your selection.*

Mike made this reply:

*I have been in the hospital for a couple weeks, and got home yesterday for the outstanding award The Fossils gave me!*

*As you know, Russ and I were pretty good friends, even though we lived so far apart. He's the one who taught me*

*how to pad a halftone for good repro on a letterpress. His constant hard work inspired me to print the club journal for the UAP and UAPAA for such a long time (and to help create small conventions for them here in Oregon). I was NAPA Mss manager for quite a while, but had a difficult time pulling in papers! I never did much personal printing for the groups. The only thing was "Pacifica," four pages of poems I would talk out of people...and after a year or two of that, lots of non-ajers were sending in material (most pretty bad!). I was always proud of the little 4-pager I did about the first negro member at the 2nd convention of NAPA.*

*Now that my babbling has gotten around to pride, Russ' award is at the top of my pride-list! It was so totally unexpected. You and The Fossils cannot know how much this means to me.* ♦

Pictures from Amateur Journalism Conference 2016 taken by Linda Donaldson, Peter Schaub, Barry Schrader, Dave Tribby, and Clarence Wolfshohl are available in an online photo album:  
<http://tinyurl.com/zfnfkfy>

### New Members Profile

## A. J. Newbies

by Dave Tribby

SEAN WILMUT recently discovered amateur journalism while searching the internet for information about letterpress equipment. "I tried 'amateur printing' and found amateur journalism." Liking what he saw, he joined the American Amateur Press Association in late August. In mid-September he joined both the National APA and (with wife Beth Potter) The Fossils.

Sean and Beth make their home in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada. They have lived in the Toronto area for many years, Sean previously living in Montreal, and Beth in England and the United States.

Sean and Beth both worked in the printing industry with commercial lithograph and some book making. "One of us did years on a paste-up table. Both know lots of books and miscellanea. Beth's career went off rather more tidily, while mine flipped and flopped. My print career dovetailed neatly with the death and destruction of Craft, and the rise of commodification and The Machine."

Sean took a basic printing class in high school, and recently returned to the black art when he needed a hobby. He now publishes *Philamot Magazine*, and plans to circulate it in the AAPA and NAPA bundles. He describes it as "a tiny magazine made of bits I create, or find in old books. It is largely a hobby, replacing a small work shop and that type of activity. I like to keep occupied." He publishes using a computer and laser printer, but this summer added a Write-A-Sign Model No. 711 press and fonts, "which will allow me to add a touch of spot color, and perhaps simple line cuts." ♦

# A Day at the LAJ

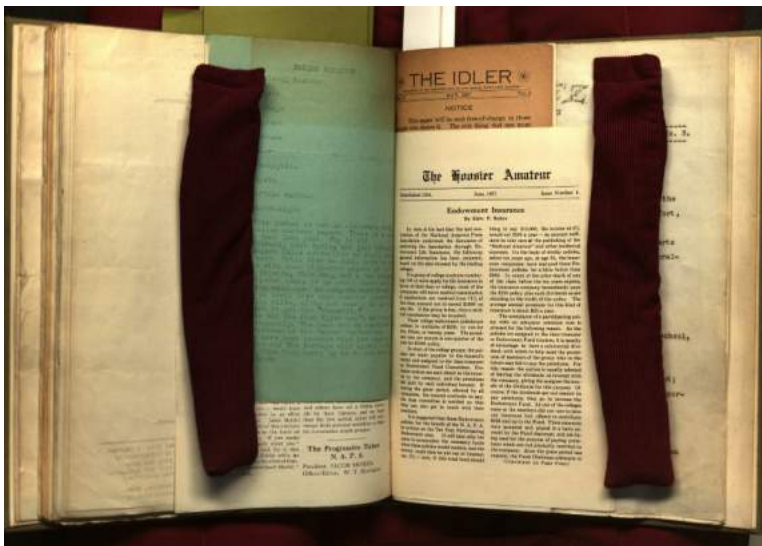
by Dave Tribby

I'M WORKING ON a research project involving Victor Bacon, Jacob Moidel, and the 1927 NAPA election. The answers to some questions can only be found in the rare publications of that era. In order to search for answers in the Library of Amateur Journalism (LAJ), my wife, Liz, and I arrived in Madison the day before Amateur Journalism Conference 2016 started.

In preparation, I found as much as I could from other sources. I used the University of Wisconsin "Email a Librarian" web page to ask some details about using the LAJ. Susan Stravinski promptly replied: "There are no restrictions on using the collection. Special Collections requests no flash for any photographs. We do have an overhead scanner that will provide images at whatever resolution you might need (up to 600 dpi tiff images)." I asked for the E. H. Smith bound volumes of amateur papers published in 1925 through 1928, and several other items.

On Wednesday, July 20, Liz and I showed up at the Memorial Library main entrance, signed in, and then took an elevator up to Special Collections, arriving just before the 9 AM opening. Susan greeted us, showed us the cart with our materials, and told us how to request additional items. After chatting a bit about the collection, we were directed to a nearby table, and were asked to position our work so it could be seen from their desk.

The 1920s were a time of low activity, and the total NAPA, UAPA, and UAPAA output required only two bound volumes per year. A separate volume held multiple years of *The National Amateur*. We first reviewed the NA, putting paper markers provided by library staff to note relevant articles. Liz took the volume to the



The E. H. Smith volumes in the LAJ include many sizes of amateur journals bound together in alphabetical order for a particular year. Weights are provided to hold down the pages during scanning.

scanner while I marked articles in the "1927 A-L" volume. The amount of time it took me to mark articles was a good match for the time it took her to do the scanning. I had finished "1927 N-Z" by 12:30, when we took a 30 minute lunch break at a nearby sandwich shop.

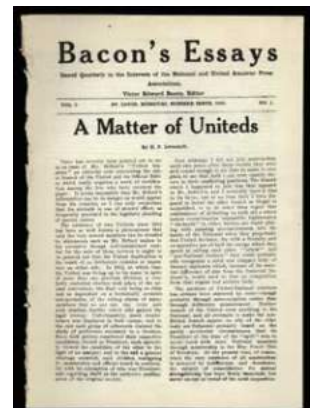
The 1925, 1926, and 1928 volumes went more quickly, since they contained fewer relevant articles. I then reviewed several other requested items, and also examined a box Susan thought I would find interesting: correspondence to Vic Moitoret from the 1970s and 1980s. I also looked at several Smith volumes from the 1930s on the cart that had been requested by another researcher for use on Friday.

We were done about 4:30—half an hour before closing—with over 200 images saved in 19 PDF files (one per volume). When copied to our thumb drive, they took up 1.3 GB. In a few instances the binding didn't allow a full scan near the inside margin, so we supplemented with photos.

Analysis of the content will take awhile, but the research results should be published in THE FOSSIL next year.



When the LAJ was housed at New York University (1967–1980), someone removed most materials related to H. P. Lovecraft (active in amateur journalism from 1914 until his death in 1937) by slicing out journals containing articles written by him. I saw evidence of this in the volumes I reviewed. Unfortunately, one of the key articles, an essay by Victor Bacon laying out the case against Jacob Moidel, in the summer 1927 (Vol. I, No. 1) issue of *Bacon's Essays*, was missing because that issue also contained a Lovecraft essay. I have been unable to find that issue in a collection, although an online seller offers one for \$85: "Worn along spine, pages loose, removed from a pamphlet bind-up, otherwise a very good copy." If you have access to a copy, I would enjoy hearing from you.



If you have access to this journal, contact Editor Tribby.



After her keynote talk at the Conference, Barry Schrader asked Jessica Isaac what she thought of the long-term prospects for our groups. She answered that amateur journalism continually dies: the hobby as practiced in the 1870s had significantly changed by the 1890s, and that version was replaced again within 20 years. Each generation has to find its own way to keep the hobby going.



At the Conference, we planned to gather outside on steps at a spacious Memorial Library entrance to take a

group photo – but sprinkles and the threat of rain forced us inside to a narrower set of stairs. The alternate location required multiple rows of people, with the three presidents on chairs in front. Everyone smiled, and several shots were snapped. Much later when we saw the results we realize the folks in front appeared much larger, and many in the middle were not well lit. I used the GIMP image manipulation program to cut the image into two pieces, and also to lighten the dark spots. The results are on page 5.

—■—

Speaking of group photos, the 1944 NAPA convention photo published in the last issue contains a mystery. Shortly after publication, Gary Bossler noted there were seven people in the third row, but the caption (from *The National Amateur*) only had six names. Who is the man standing between Franklin Moss and Earl Bonnell? Quite a few people who attended the convention were not listed in



Is the unidentified man at the 1944 convention (left) Charles A.A. Parker (right)?

## Frederick H. Gage

September 28, 1925 – June 18, 2016

by Dave Tribby

THE DECEMBER 1954 *National Amateur* reported that Maine native Fred Gage, “read about the NAPA convention in Portland [in July 1954], but evidently did not realize visitors would be welcome to attend. However, after he obtained a small hand press outfit and began to try his luck at the art, he decided he might be eligible and sent along his inquiry.”

Interested in journalism from an early age (his senior profile in the high school yearbook notes, “he plans to attend business college in preparation for work as a news reporter”), Fred was news editor of WLAM radio-TV in Lewiston, Maine, when he joined NAPA. He later was sports editor of the Lewiston *Evening Journal*. Even after retiring from the sports department of the Lewiston *Sun Journal* in 1990, he continued to write a horse racing column.

Born in Strong, Maine, Fred graduated from Strong High School as class president and valedictorian in 1943. He served in the U. S. Navy 2½ years, then attended Boston University, graduating in 1950.

In 1949, he married Carolyn Lois Mitchell. Carolyn, their daughters Debra and Karen, three grandchildren, and numerous great-grandchildren survive.

Fred began publishing soon after he joined NAPA and continued for 55 years. The first issue of *The Gage*



Fred Gage

the caption. Gary believes that one of them, Charles A. A. Parker, could be the mystery man, and sent along a photo of him from the December 1944 issue. What do you think: is it a match?

—■—

Would you like to receive e-mail notification when a new issue of THE FOSSIL is posted online? I have a new mailing list for anyone who would like to receive such a message. Non-members who would like to keep up with us are welcome, and members might enjoy seeing the pictures that are in color. All AAPA and NAPA officers are enrolled, plus a few others who I believe are interested. There should only be four messages per year. My e-mail address is in the masthead on page 12.

—■—

Vontage has identified The Fossils, founded in 1904, as a startup. Somehow they got my name and postal address (probably from registration of thefossils.org internet domain) and wrote to solicit for their business phone service. Their letter begins, “Start-up businesses like yours can’t be limited by technology...” ♦

*Pin* was dated December 1954; it reached number 82 in November 2009.

Fred joined The Fossils in 1975, and maintained his membership until January 2015.

He served in a number of NAPA offices, including official editor in 1991–92 and president in both 1992–93 and 2002–03. In the first presidential message of his second term Fred remarked, “Exactly ten years ago, at an NAPA convention in Canton, Ohio, I accepted the members’ vote to serve a term as president of this hobby association. I’d served just about every other office, but had succeeded in fending off the requests to move into the top chair. ... I’m serving again as my personal memorial to those great NAPA friends no longer with us who gave so much of their time, energy, creativity, and loyalty to this organization.” In his final report, he remarked on one accomplishment of his administration: “Without any set goals, your president sought to encourage members to boost our monthly bundles.” He noted the number of pieces during the first six months had grown from 52 in 2002 to 72 in 2003. Later, Historian Jake Warner pointed out another important achievement: “Fred ... saw that the Laureate Contest was in chaos.” He not only identified the problem, he produced results: “For the first time in four years the contest was back on course.” Jake concluded his report by noting, “The most a President of NAPA can hope for is that he leaves the association in better shape than he found it. Fred Gage certainly accomplished that in his successful year as President.”

In addition to his NAPA activity, Fred printed pages for the annual publication *It’s a Small World*. Between 1956 and 2011, he had pages in 51 issues (missing only six during that span). ♦

## Hawes Endowment Funded

by Ben Strand

THE UW-MADISON LIBRARIES are pleased to report that the The Leland M. Hawes, Jr. Fund for the Library of Amateur Journalism has been fully endowed. Funds that have a corpus of \$10,000 or more will begin to accrue annual interest. The Leland M. Hawes Jr. Fund has contributions of \$12,742.75. The annual returns are then provided to Special Collections for its work on the Library of Amateur Journalism. Currently, the annual return rate for funds at the UW Foundation is 4.5%, so beginning in the final quarter of 2016 the fund will begin generating approximately \$573 annually for the ongoing support of the Library of Amateur Journalism.

The fund supports the processing, cataloging, digitization, preservation, research, and expansion of the Library of Amateur Journalism in Special Collections. The Library of Amateur Journalism, is a repository of amateur papers and memorabilia dating from the 1850s and donated by the organization The Fossils in 2004 to the Special Collections Department of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and located in Memorial Library.

The gifts emanating from the AJ Conference in Madison, including \$5,000 from the National Amateur Press Association and a NAPA Match for LAJ challenge grant of \$3,000 from Bill Boys, covered the final margin to fully fund the endowment. Additional gifts of \$2,541.30 were generated as part of the LAJ Challenge Grant. There is \$458.70 remaining, in possible donations for additional matching gifts.

Gifts to bolster the fund can be made directly online (<https://secure.supportuw.org>) or via mail at:

University of Wisconsin Foundation  
US Bank Lockbox  
Box 78807  
Milwaukee, WI 53278-0807

*A spreadsheet with Ben's article breaks out giving from July 2014 through September 2016 to both the Hawes Endowment and also directly to the LAJ's ongoing work:*

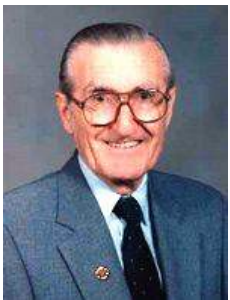
Giver	Endowment	Ongoing Work
The Fossils	\$2,165.00	\$1,012.00
AAPA	\$3,185.00	\$1,000.00
NAPA	\$3,000.00	\$2,000.00
Individuals	\$4,392.75	\$2,090.05
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$12,742.75</b>	<b>\$6,102.05</b> ♦

## William C. Belt

October 12, 1924 – March 13, 2016

by Dave Tribby

WILLIAM CARLOS BELT joined the National Amateur Press Association in August 1966 after reading "How to Set Up a Home Print Shop" in the July issue of *Popular Science*. (The last part of the 5½ page article included contact information for NAPA's J. Rolfe Castleman and AAPA's Leland Hawes, Jr.) At that time, William had been printing for four years and owned 5 x 8 and 9 x 13 Kelsey presses.



William C. Belt

William joined The Fossils in 1981 and maintained his membership until 2015.

A native of rural Boring, Maryland, William was a 1942 graduate of Franklin High School in nearby Reisterstown. He enlisted with the U.S. Army in March 1944 and served in Europe. After returning home, he worked as a distributor for Koontz Creamery and the Baltimore *Sun* and Baltimore *News American*. He had a 19 year career with the U.S. Postal Service, including serving as postmaster in Reisterstown.

He was married to Charlotte Conaway Belt, a 1940 graduate of Franklin High School, for 53 years before her death in 1998.

For the last ten years, William lived in Carroll Lutheran Village, Westminster, MD. ♦

## 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)

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**Webmaster:** Dave Tribby (contact information above)

THE FOSSIL – October 2016