

The



Fossil

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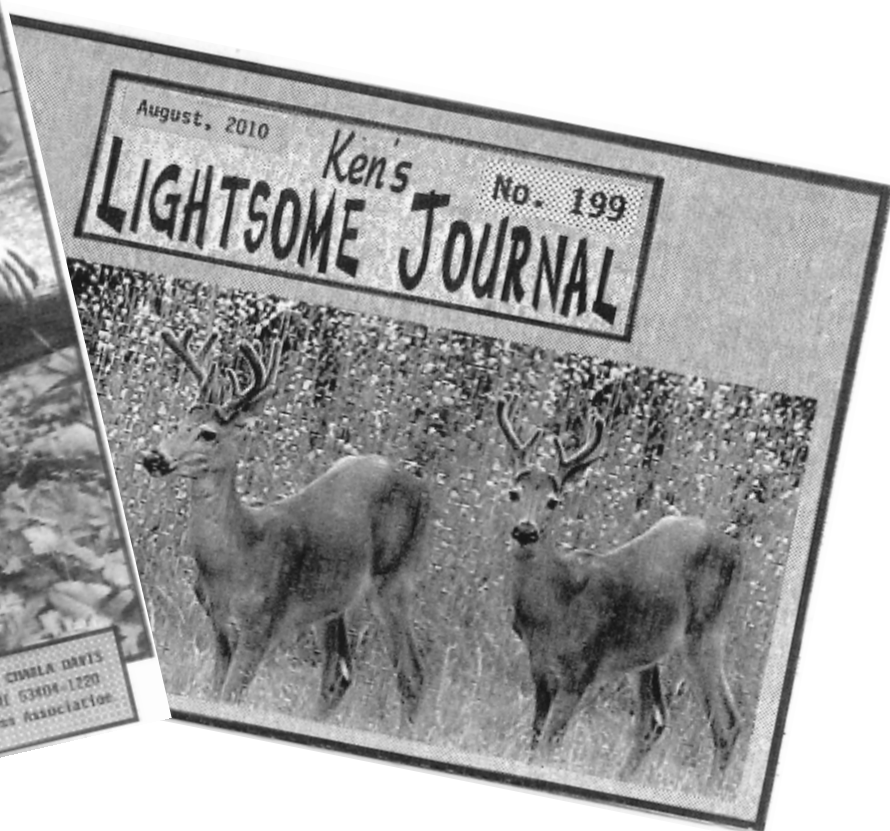


Ken Davis

Recipient of the 2010 Russ Paxton Memorial Award
for Service to Amateur Journalism



Above is a photo of Ken & Charla Davis taken from Ken's new journal, *Photo Fun*. Ken created the picture from the two pictures shown, not with a computer and PhotoShop, but with scissors and rubber cement.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

WHERE TO NEXT?

Guy Miller

If you read beyond the lines of the NAPA Librarian's Report in the September issue of The National Amateur, you will find The Fossils at work doing what we are meant to do: recovering and preserving historic treasures. The recovery of the Graham-Wesson collection, thanks to the close cooperation of the AAPA and NAPA and the subsequent almost herculean toil of NAPA Librarian and Fossils Director Stan Oliner in sorting and placing this horde of journals will remain a jewel in the crown of organized amateur journalism. And should his toils uncover new avenues of opportunities, Stan knows that the funds of The Fossils lie ready to assist him; for, to repeat, in the words of Director Jack Swenson, "It's what we do."

But, for how much longer? Judging by the support of its officers, one might conclude that "forever" could be the operative word for The Fossils. Unfortunately, though, no matter how enthusiastic Fossils officers might be, our organization, perhaps more than any other of the groups in ajay, depends on funding to promote most of its mission. And funds, as we all know, come from membership dues and donations. The latter, we are grateful to acknowledge, are still forthcoming, from both members and friends. But the membership itself is steadily declining until today we have but forty dues-paying names on The Fossil mailing list. This situation means that right now the 4-issue production cost of our official organ averages close to \$20 per member, an obviously unsustainable burden for very long.

Your officers would like to continue its publication at least through the fiscal year 2014, our group's 110th birthday. But, time will tell. In the meantime, our ranks become thinner, alas, from the passing of valued friends. Our latest loss, as all amateurism knows by now, was long-time Fossil Fred Liddle, also a member of AAPA, NAPA and APA. To quote veteran ajay Fossil Lee Hawes, "Fred Liddle was recognized as 'the quintessential amateur journalist' within a few years after he joined the American Amateur Press Association." Although he was active in all the ajay groups to which he belonged, it was the AAPA to which he was most devoted and for which he served in numerous offices including 7 times as official editor. To say that he became a beloved friend to all with whom he came in contact is not in the least an exaggeration.

FOLLOWING A DREAM

Ken Davis

Recipient, Russell L. Paxton Memorial Award for Service to Amateur Journalism

It began almost 70 years ago. At the age of six I was cutting out pictures and photographs from magazines and newspapers and pasting them into my own little "zine."

I continued having dreams of one day becoming a writer/printer/publisher over the next twelve years during the days of grade school and high school. A hectograph and a Swiftset press introduced me to "real" publishing.

Learning to operate a Linotype in high school led to my landing a fulltime job in a commercial hot-metal print shop just two months after graduation. Thirty years followed working as a Linotype operator/compositor. When the shop went out of business I moved to a modern shop, operating the paper cutter and doing bindery work. I retired in 2002.

I seriously took up the hobby of amateur journalism in 1968 when I discovered and joined the American Amateur Press Association. Over the last 43 years almost 500 journals of various titles have been published,

more than 300 of them distributed through the AAPA monthly bundles.

What a thrill it's been to have those youthful dreams become reality. Through amateur journalism not only did I get the chance to use my writing and graphic arts skills but also offered other writers and even budding young artists a chance to be published.

Amateur journalism offers one the opportunity to create something personally unique, along with enjoying the satisfaction of accomplishment.

**THE FOSSILS CONGRATULATE
MARION FIELDS WYLLIE
UPON THE OCCASION OF HER
ONE-HUNDRED FIFTH BIRTHDAY
OCTOBER 26, 2011**



Marion Fields Wyllie at age 93

Selection and Introduction By
Martha E. Shivers

Introduction

Marion Fields was born on Mountain View Farm, Campbellford, Ontario, the older of two daughters. She attended public school in Thornbury. Her first poem was published when she was thirteen years old. She completed high school in 1924, then went to Toronto to work at Bell Telephone. Then in 1925 she was copyholder and proofreader at the Owen Sound Sun-Times. A few short articles and poems were published mainly in the Toronto Telegram.

She married Victor Fleming Wyllie in 1939, then they lived on a farm near Kilworthy. Three sons were born. George became a construction worker. Douglas was a retarded trainee at a rehabilitation centre. Bob died at the age of nineteen from drowning.

Problem on the Beach, her first book, was assembled by Isabel Wilson, Owen Sound, Ontario. In later years more of her poems were printed in paperback booklets. Her sister died at age thirty-five. Son Douglas died in a rehabilitation centre. Now in July 2011, son George is living in the same assisted living facility where Marion lives, each in their own apartment. Spring Onions and Flowers of the Field were also self-published booklets.

She has been a member of several writing groups, including the poetry round-robin The Rhymers, attends the Greg Bruce writing group, and also gives help to writers in the facility where she lives. In past years, Marion was very active in her church. Despite the reverses she has suffered in her life, Marion has always been very "upbeat," looking on the bright side of life. Her philosophy of life is captured very well in her poetry; her poem "Winding Path," reprinted below, is almost emblematic of her appreciation of life with all its difficulties.

Poems By Marion Fields Wyllie

September

(from Haiku Calendar)

Early morning walk,
if I woke in time, would be
invigorating.

Statue on the lawn,
now embowered in bright bloom,
do you dread winter?

October

(from Haiku Calendar)

How bright, warm and strong
autumn's glory in the woods,
and yet how fragile!

In rose-tinted sky
wild geese make their flying vee,
in black silhouette.

Leaves Fall Softly

The leaves, as golden as your hair,
fall gently
on the grass

Like tender fingers they caress
that grave I cannot
pass.

O let me hear some well-known word,
with laughter,
in your voice.

To feel your presence now would make
my sorrowing soul
rejoice.

No mirth is here, or echo of
the voice I loved
so much;

But leaves fall softly on my head
with silent, soothing
touch.

Winding Path

(from Flowers of the Field)

Once I longed for a plain path
with a view of the way ahead.
Once I longed for a straight road
and knowledge of where it led.

Then I longed for a garden
In neat, square plots laid out,
each with its perfect border,
and a clipped hedge all about.

More like a walk in the woodland
my life has proved to be ...
hillocks and rocks and pitfalls,
and signs I could hardly see.

Now I know that the straight path
has its pains and its perils too;
with a blazing sun or a driving rain
for the sky's not always blue.

Had my walk been that smooth roadway
with its tidy garden rows,
I'd never have found the winding path
where the honeysuckle grows.

I'm glad of the stones that have turned my steps
and the hills I've had to climb.
I shall love a curve and a sudden view
as long as I still have time.

A Happy Song

Sing me sometimes a happy song.
Since both sadness and joy belong
To one who has lived so long!
Sing no more of a long-lost love;
Sing no more like the mourning-dove;
Sing me a happy song.

Sing of the sunset and the dawn.
Sing of the daisies on the lawn,
Not of a day long gone.
Sing of the blue skies, not the grays.
Tell of the friends and the joy-filled days;
Sing me a happy song.

Sing no more of a dream gone bad.
Sing me the tidings that make me glad.
Sing me a happy song.
We've had enough of grief and pain.
Sing of the sunshine and warm spring rain—
Sing me a happy song!

Easter

Would you prefer
That God had gathered broken flesh,
Sutured all ruptured vessels,
Tied all torn muscles;
Imprisoning the agonized spirit once again
In the cage of a mortal physique;
So cancelling the precious death,
And making of His glorious Son
A mere God's-darling
Who must not be hurt?
Could that one save you?
Sinners like me
Are glad of a Christ
Who could weep, and ache, and bleed to death
For us;
Whose temporary house of clay, like ours,
Is outlived by the spirit.

Farm Prayer

God be in our sowing—
Tireless hands and goodly seed.
God be in our waiting—
Patient faith outlasting need.

God be in our harvesting—
Ripe abundance in the fall.
God be in us harvesters;
Make us goodly stewards all.

Table Grace

Thank you, Lord, for the laden table;
May we share as we are able.
Faithful stewards help us be
Of goods and talents, under Thee.

Reflected Light

As the moon, in the depth of the night,
Sends, reflected, the sun's pure light,
So, in the dust of daily life,
Dimmed though it be by selfish strife,
God's great love for the soul of me
Shines in the globe of humanity.

Penitent Prayer

O God, forgive the peoples of your earth,
Whose vision of your kingdom has grown dim;
And whose inventiveness, of doubtful worth,
Is harnessing the atom to their whim.

Their statesmen now make politics their law,
Filling earth's crevices with fission's threat,
And to expedience's greedy maw
Feed that which might have saved the hungry yet.

Where is the righteousness that lifts up men?
The blessedness God-fearing nations know?
You made the world! Restore the earth again.
Let all your beings love and goodness show.

We can reclaim Life, even at this late hour!
The will to rule our spirits brings the power.

AAPA'S 2011 CONVENTION—MY IMPRESSIONS

Ivan Snyder

The program cover looked familiar. Sure, it was the illustration used on Volume 1 Number 1 of the American Amateur Journalist for February 1937! Appropriate that the AAPA's 75th Anniversary Convention commingled some time looking back with time looking to the future.

The 2011 convention of the American Amateur Press Association took place Thursday, June 30 through Sunday, July 3 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Foster City, California. Convention co-hosts Dave Tribby and Steve Robison took good advantage of their membership in the San Jose Printers' Guild to involve other Guild members in convention activities. Several longtime members traditionally at the convention were notably absent: Leland Hawes, Fred Liddle, Guy Miller, and Barry Schrader were very much missed.

Words of welcome and introductions led off the first Friday morning session, followed by a few informal officers' reports. Then the first presentation was given by member Matt Kelsey. He described his book publishing and letterpress printing ventures. Matt is the proprietor of the Liber Apertus Press, which republishes out-of-print books. He told how he got into book publishing and described what is involved in getting a book to market. Matt passed around several samples of books he publishes, as well as samples of wedding invitations and business cards he prints commercially.

President Mike O'Connor's presentation highlighted the "looking forward" theme. "AAPA's Future" explored issues of stimulating activity and recruiting the right mixture of members. On the next presentation, Official Editor Dean Rea joined Mike at the podium to discuss "Pixels in a Pica World."

Friday afternoon's agenda centered on two book arts hot spots in nearby San Francisco. The first was Arion Press, which included visits to the layout and printing areas, the bindery, and the type foundry?also known as M&H Type. The second tour was to the San Francisco Center for the Book. The group surveyed the type cabinets and presses, and observed a couple of projects in progress on two Vandercook presses. Saturday's program began with a brief look back, as Peter Schaub presented an illustrated talk reviewing his early years in the AAPA as a fifteen-year-old prep school senior in the mid-1960s. Peter's illustrations included views of his journal "The Novelty Pressman."

Two old-time printers at the type cases engaging in a tongue-in-cheek dialogue touched on current issues—as well as personalities—in the AAPA. Dean Rea and Ivan Snyder took both sides on the issues, and sometimes switched sides. They offered pointed remarks about most of the members present and a few who were absent.

Two traditional convention activities took up the Saturday afternoon and evening sessions: the auction and the banquet. Member George W. Hamilton, of Vienna, Austria was the star at both events. He not only gave us an entertaining performance as auctioneer—with the help of Dave and Liz Tribby, but the auction turned out to be profitable as well.

Just before the banquet, AAPA's award-winning photographer, Greg McKelvey, was prevailed upon to take the group photo—though he protested that his skills lay outside of "the group photography business." After an enjoyable and tasty meal, the year's Laureate Awards were announced by Laureate Committee member Hamilton, and certificates were given to the recipients who were present. Pres. Mike O'Connor presented AAPA Stalwart awards "to relatively long-term, current members who have exhibited, over time, that extra effort to promote amateur journalism and the AAPA." The awards, in alphabetical order, went to Leland M. Hawes, Jr.; Fred Liddle; Dean Rea; Jack Scott; Ivan Snyder; and David Tribby. Mike also announced that the 2011 Russell L. Paxton Award for Service to Amateur Journalism, given by The Fossils, will go to AAPA's Ken Davis, publisher of "Ken's Lightsome Journal."

Concluding the successful convention were two more noteworthy events: the picnic in San Jose's History Park and a wrap-up in the Dave and Liz Tribby residence. After a picnic in the park, members

meandered over to the Printing Office where the San Jose Printers' Guild members played host to the visitors. Dave Robison demonstrated one of his Multigraph presses, set up to print in Braille. Both Dave Robison and Marjorie Wilser demonstrated the F. M. Weiler "Liberty" jobber press—with no throw-off lever. Some members ventured away from the Print Shop to enjoy other features of the park, including a ride on the trolley line.

A short drive brought the group to the home of Dave and Liz Tribby in Sunnyvale. With the purchase of Charlie Hinde's Bean Creek Press in 2003, Dave has an abundance of type, borders, dingbats, and all the other stuff needed for letterpress printing. This enviable array kept members busy until the call to help consume the pizza.

The date and location of AAPA's 2012 convention has not yet been announced, but members have lots of memories of this year's event to keep them entertained until the next event in 2012.

THE 136TH NAPA CONVENTION, NASHVILLE, TN

Gary Bossler

The convention was held July 7-9, 2011, at Hyatt Place Suites, Brentwood (Nashville) TN, located just off I-65. Most people arrived on July 6th, and it was mostly a small group of old friends gathering, though there was one member who was attending his first convention and that was Steve Powell of South Carolina. In all I counted 21 people at the convention, 18 of whom were members. However, Bill and Ruth Boys had left after the first day of the convention as Bill had developed a slight infection and since he had recently had a kidney transplant, it seemed prudent to have that checked out. We later heard from Ruth that Bill was doing well.

Business meetings were held only in the mornings, thus allowing members more free time to explore their surroundings or attend discussions or field trips. There were many interesting things to see in the Nashville area. There certainly did not seem to be an economic slowdown in the area as compared to home (Massillon, Ohio).

The first day, July 7th, had the usual roll call and officers' reports after some word of welcome from Alice Brosey, chair of the convention committee. All officers were present except the Vice President and Steve Powell as named Vice President pro tem by President Dave Warner. Members were then free in the afternoon to do whatever they felt like doing. For example, Jack Visser and Harold Shive found the Ryman Auditorium. I had a car that seemed to start whenever it felt like it; so, I went in search of a mechanic. Alice Brosey supplied me with a name and address. Guy Miller went with me.

In the evening we were given a special presentation by Carol Roberts, Director of Preservation Services of the Tennessee State Library and Archives. It was a very informative talk on materials that should be used if we want our journals to last perhaps one hundred years or more. Also, we learned that we need to refrain from storing papers in basements and attics.

Day two brought the elections. The following officers were elected:

President: Alice Brosey

Official Editor: Harold Shive

Executive Judge: Dave Warner

Secretary-Treasurer: Bill Boys has one more year to fill

2012 Convention site: Cincinnati

2013 Convention site: Savannah, GA

Amendment to the constitution: Passed (eliminating the activity requirement)

Also a discussion took place on our deficit spending and rapid increase of postal rates. Dave Warner made a motion (which passed) to amend the by-laws to increase the dues to \$30.00 per year. Even that will not cover the postage costs for The National Amateur and the bundles.

The afternoon brought a trip downtown to the Hatch Show Print Museum. Manager Jim Sherrander treated members to an after-hours tour of the working print shop which has been printing show posters by letterpress since 1879. They make frequent use of the 50-inch Vandercook proof press, the largest that was ever made.

Saturday brought final reports of committees and the banquet, which was held at 7:00pm with our traditional group photo taken at 6:00pm. The banquet speaker was Mr. William Black of Middle Tennessee State University who, along with his narration, presented slides illustrating the work of his students in reproducing an English common press.

No ajoy meet seems complete without the publication of a convention paper. NAPA delegates presented three: Nashville Hash, published by Gary Bossler, Guy Miller, Harold Shive, and Jack Visser; Nashville Newsletter from Alice Brosey; and Marc Brosey's Manuscript Afternoononly.

There was to be a catered picnic on Sunday. However, many folks, Guy Miller and myself included, chose to leave early Sunday morning for our return trip home.

Hosts Alice and Marc Brosey are to be commended for a job well done.

The Fossil thanks AAPAn Ivan Snyder and NAPAn Gary Bossler for taking the time to set down these impressions for our readers.

Please go to the AAPA website at www.greenapple.com/~aapa/cons/2011/aapa11.htm for an official, well-illustrated account of the 2011 AAPA convention.

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If we were able to take a voyage back through time to the first twenty-five years of the existence of our organization in 1904-29, probably no name from the world of professional writing would have been held in dearer memory of the members of The Fossils than that of juvenile writer Oliver Optic, who had so encouraged the genesis of our hobby in Oliver Optic's Magazine in 1867-75. We are fortunate indeed to have for our current number an article by Peter C. Walther, today's pre-eminent Oliver Optic scholar.

THE MISSING TABLET

Peter C. Walther

Not many people today know the name "Oliver Optic" yet a century and a half ago his was a household personality, the common perception being that he was a popular, well esteemed and highly regarded author of books for young people. The Optic books were good sellers from 1854 to the turn of the century and even beyond. How soon we forget and how speedily the sands of time run. Oliver Optic, Horatio Alger, Harry Castlemon, Edward S. Ellis, G. A. Henty, Gilbert Patten and a host of others...now only a memory. Alger holds his own these days as does the Henty mystique in the United Kingdom, and Patten's creation Frank Merriwell too lives on in the annals of dime novel and radio lore. Oliver Optic though seems to have gone the way of the dinosaur. Yet plans are afoot to remedy that situation. More anon.

"Oliver Optic," whose real name was William T. Adams, was born in Medway, MA in 1822 and started his career as a school teacher at the young age of 21. Early postings saw him in West Roxbury, MA and Dorchester, MA until he gave it all up in 1846 to go into the hotel business in Boston with his father and

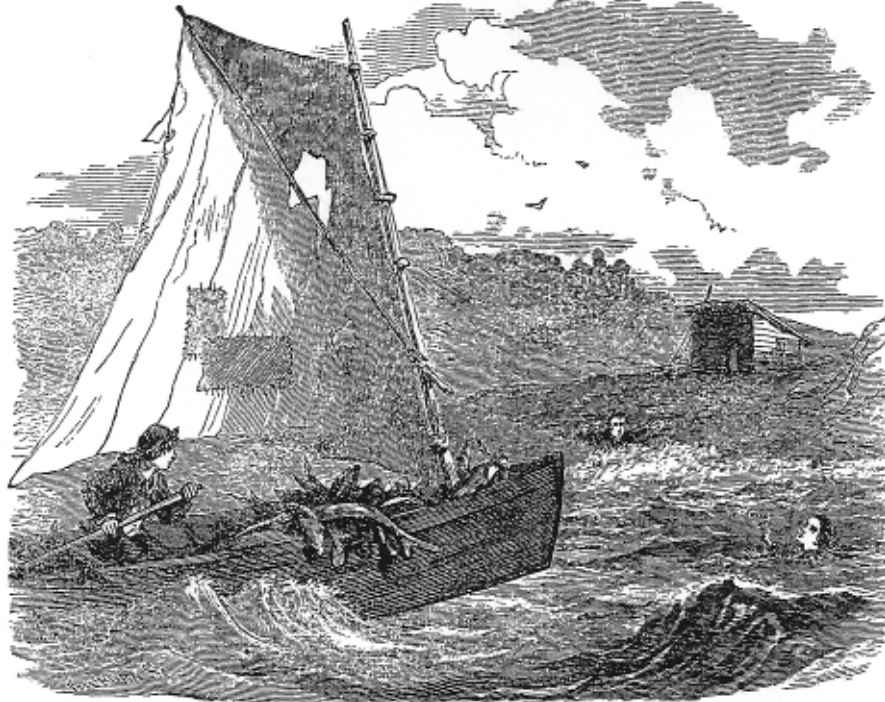
OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

EVERY WEEK

VOL. I.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 1867.

No. 1.



BESSIE'S MISFORTUNE. Page 4.

THE STARRY FLAG;

OR,

The Young Fisherman of Cape Ann.

BY OLIVER OPTIC.

CHAPTER I.

THE DINGY DORY.

BUT I must have one more bath before we go, father," said Bessie Watson, as she gazed down into the clear, blue waters of the sea, which surged against the rocks near the hotel on Cape Ann, where she and her parents had been spending a week.

"There is hardly time, Bessie," replied Mr. Watson, as he consulted his watch.

"What time is it, father?"

"Quarter past eight."

"There is time enough then."

"I don't like to have you bathe here, Bessie. It is a dangerous place, and I'm going to Rye Beach almost wholly because you are so fond of the salt water. I have been afraid, every time you went in, that you would slip off that rock."

"There is no danger."

"I think there is."

"The rope will prevent any accident."

"The rope is some protection, but I don't think the place is safe."

"Just one more plunge, pa; I shall feel so much better for the journey!" pleaded Bessie, whose bright eyes and pretty face were so elo-

brother. The Adams House augured well and seemed to prosper but hotel management did not exactly suit him and so in 1848 he went back to the Boston schoolroom, where he served in two schools until he resigned in 1865 to devote himself exclusively to authorship.

Literary endeavors had come quite naturally to him years before; he vouchsafed a start with the pen in 1852 because it was ready money for him, he had many creative ideas to fashion into stories and he could write rather quickly. Plus his work soon became much in demand. It was a breezy style he essayed in the many Boston literary weeklies of the time. Short, pithy sketches limning the foibles of everyday life, with human characters exhibiting the weaknesses and failures we all experience. Adams wrote this kind of material repeatedly during his early years, and it is to be regretted that only a small portion of these wonderful stories were ever collected in book form. In *Doors And Out* by Oliver Optic was the only such published volume of this kind and it contained twenty-eight of the author's most entertaining and fanciful tales. Beginning in 1854 however he wrote, almost as a lark, his first juvenile, *The Boat Club*, which met with a lively sale and exceeded his and his publishers' expectations. Volume upon volume soon followed and by 1865 writing and traveling established the tenor of the rest of his life. He wrote prolifically until his death in 1897. Indeed his Boston publishers Lee and Shepard regarded him as the most important author in their literary stable and they made a great deal of money with their Oliver Optic books which regularly rolled off the presses year after year. In totality they amounted to over a hundred during his lifetime while miscellaneous and little known additional books increased his productivity rate by something like forty more.

In 1846 he married Sarah Jenkins who bore him three children: Ellen Frances, who died in infancy; Alice Adams, who married Sol Smith Russell the famous actor; and Emma Louise Adams, who married the lawyer George W. White but who also died prematurely in 1884.

You might wonder what any of this has to do with the Fossils. During the 1860s and 1870s Adams became the patron saint of hundreds of young publishers across the land who printed their own amateur newspapers. He had inaugurated his own magazine *Our Boys And Girls* in 1867 and regularly in its editorial columns he never ceased to support and encourage all those who sent him their "copy" for review and judgment. Many of these young editors owed him a debt of gratitude that could never be repaid. Early figures in this literary arena who counted him as a trusted and valued friend were William L. Terhune and Charles H. Fowle, to name but two. Adams went so far as to dedicate some of his juvenile novels to these young literateurs. Fowle in his autobiographical monograph recounts a wonderful afternoon spent at his home in Newton Center, MA in company with Oliver Optic (who had traveled from his home in Dorchester) and a friendly gathering of like-minded tyros, newspaper editors and publishers who were eager to meet their favorite author.

Now we come to the tablet, the memorial tablet, or as the title of this piece has it "the missing tablet," for missing it is and most unfortunately so. Here is the history of what I have been able to piece together. This specialized group known as "The Fossils," the formal organization dedicated to the collection, preservation and awareness of amateur newspapers must have been in the minds of its founders by 1903 because in the spring of 1904 they held their first formal reunion. In the years that followed they met religiously year after year, no doubt to reminisce, greet old friends and raise the fraternal bumper. The fourteenth annual reunion however was a special one indeed. On Saturday April 28, 1917, at the Hotel McAlpin in New York, the Fossils once again deliberated after their usual fashion, this time however to recognize the unique talent and support of their erstwhile literary benefactor Oliver Optic. An "Oliver Optic Memorial Tablet" had been designed and cast by the firm of Jonas Williams in New York, the committee of eight being chaired by C. R. Sherlock. The details of what transpired during that memorable meeting may be lost to time but a rough scale representation of said tablet was reproduced on the menu card (see illustration). We don't know at this time whether it was to be free-standing or mounted upon a

wall. No doubt there were some present at that distant day who recalled Mr. Adams personally with much affection and regard. After all, he had only been dead for twenty years.

Mr. G. Heidel Loudon, then president of the Fossils, wrote in his message in the September 1917 newsletter: "I have continued the Committee on the 'Oliver Optic' Tablet, as they have not completed their work, but, I understand, are making progress. [This is somewhat confusing but no doubt had to do with an outstanding bill for the work completed.] We still want contributions to complete the amount of the cost, so hurry up and send your 'mite' to Treasurer [Louis] Kempner."

Of much more significance however was the attendance of the guest of honor, no less a personage than Oliver Optic's daughter herself, Mrs. Alice Adams Russell who was present with her daughter Lillian. One can only speculate what must have been her thoughts during the course of that momentous evening. Fortunately for posterity Mrs. Russell wrote a letter to then ex-president George M. Huss of Reserve, Wisconsin on the very next day (Optic being referred to in the president's message as "our old friend and mentor") and it duly appeared in the newsletter quoted above. I herewith transcribe it completed as it appeared:

"I want to thank you, and through you all the members of the Fossils for the privilege of witnessing the presentation of the tablet in memory of my father. It was a wonderful experience to me, and has made a lasting impression.

"As I looked upon the long row of fine faces gathered together at that table to pay tribute to a man, who twenty years ago passed from our mortal view, it seemed to me so beautiful that it brought tears to my eyes; and I hope that somehow, somewhere, 'Oliver Optic' knows how truly 'the works of a man live after him.'

"I want to thank you and all the other 'old boys' for the warm reception that you gave to one of the 'old girls,' and to express the hope that someday we may meet again. The memory of the two long lines of interested, smiling faces lingers with me, and will for many a day. The delightful courtesy shown to my daughter and myself was much appreciated, and indeed it was an occasion long to be remembered by us both. Long live the Fossils' Club, and good luck to them, one and all, is the earnest wish of

Yours sincerely,

ALICE ADAMS RUSSELL

Ridgewood, N.J., April 29, 1917.

I would like to think that Oliver Optic lingers even to this day in the minds of those who regard him with the enduring respect and devotion he so richly deserves.

I must remind you once again that the tablet has indeed entirely disappeared. At least for the present. It was part of the collection of The Library of Amateur Journalism at the Franklin Institute in the early days and was photographed for the October 1939 issue of Edwin Hadley Smith's Library News. What transpired in the years that followed was a crap shoot. We do know that the last individual who personally recalled seeing it displayed in the collection was Mr. Stan Oliner who saw it in July 1957, but "I have no memory of such a tablet coming with the bound paper collection to me in Grand Junction, Colorado in 1964" (email from Stan Oliner to Peter Walther, March 22, 2011). So it has been well over half a century since its presence was noted. I myself have contacted Mr. John Alvit, Senior Curator at the Franklin Institute, who is digging away in hopes of unearthing it sometime soon.

And there the matter must rest for the time being. The president, archivists, staff and curators at the American Antiquarian Society (AAS) in Worcester, MA, where a unique repository of amateur newspapers is collected, catalogued and preserved and available for study, and which will in addition house my substantial and unique Oliver Optic collection, are aware of this tablet. With the permission of the Fossils and the

THE LOST WORKS OF OLIVER OPTIC

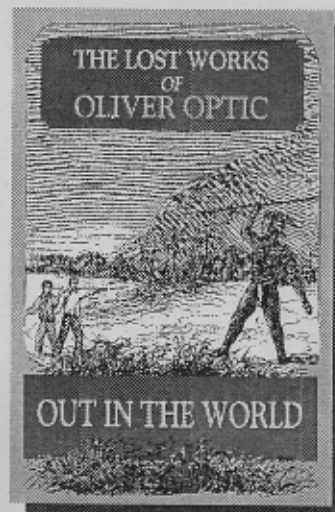
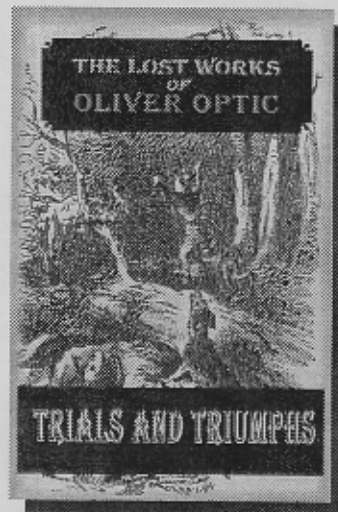
Volume One: TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS

Volume Two: OUT IN THE WORLD



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Franklin Institute, the AAS would be honored to display it prominently in the reading room as befits its cultural significance for all to see. To be present at such an unveiling where this irreplaceable Oliver Optic Memorial would find its final resting place after too many years of anonymity would indeed cause my emotions to get the better of me, and I would no doubt experience the same heartfelt sentiments that Alice Adams Russell herself experienced those many years ago.

July 18, 2011

POSTSCRIPT FOR THE CURIOUS

Recently my publishers and I have unveiled a project which we title “The Lost Works of Oliver Optic.” It will attempt to reprint much of this beloved author’s early work: newspaper and magazine stories, serials and travelogues that are not only virtually unknown but were never collected in book form. Two volumes are already issued, a third is in preparation and we hope many more will follow. This material is a delight. Under the supervision of the editor all pages have been scanned from the original issues, engravings and all, in clear readable type, along with annotations for each story, a historical introduction by the editor as well as a foreword by a recognized academic scholar in the field of nineteenth century juvenile literature. These books make wonderful gifts, are sturdily bound and are sure to become collector’s items. They would appeal to readers of nostalgia and popular literature, home schoolers, specialized libraries and historical societies as well as readers who savor the Oliver Optic canon. These tales are generally unavailable on the open market and have met with positive reviews and notices. To quote Mrs. Russell once again it can be truly said with these books that “the works of a man live after him.” The flyer reproduced in this number of *The Fossil* contains further information.

THE LOST WORKS OF OLIVER OPTIC REVIEWED

Trials and Triumphs: The Adventures of Paul Clifford (The Lost Works of Oliver Optic: Volume I), Machias ME: Tumbleby & Coombs, 2009, paperbound, xvi+207pp., \$19.00 plus shipping. Forward by Robert E. Kasper, Executive Director, Horatio Alger Society. Edited with an introduction and notes by Peter C. Walther.

Out in the World: The Further Adventures of Paul Clifford (The Lost Works of Oliver Optic: Volume II), Machias ME: Tumbleby & Coombs, 2010, paperbound, xiii+209pp., \$19.00 plus shipping. Forward by Laura Wasowicz, Curator of Children’s Literature, American Antiquarian Society. Edited with an introduction and notes by Peter C. Walther.

The range of work by children’s author William T. Adams (1822-1897) (“Oliver Optic”) available through e-Bay and other internet sources is rather wide—from books priced at only a few dollars through expensive collector’s editions. To his credit, Optic expert and bibliographer Peter Walther’s selections in these two volumes are hitherto unreprinted material from the periodical *Student and Schoolmate*. The adventures of Paul Clifford (named for the principal character of Bulwer-Lytton’s 1830 novel?) appeared in 1863-64-65 while other selections appeared earlier, in 1858, 1860 and 1862.

I am not sure why editor Walther decided to split the adventures of Paul Clifford between the two volumes. The first volume sees him through many tribulations in the business world in Boston, while the second follows his career as a sailor in chilly Antarctic waters. Walther does not excuse Optic for every

fault of his writing and specifically cites his mistaken placement of walruses in the Antarctic (these beasts live only in the Arctic regions). However, the adventures of Clifford do make enjoyable reading, even for an adult, and I found myself carried along from adventure to adventure by Optic's fluid prose. I think I liked best Clifford's adventures in the business world of Boston, which of course Optic knew well; the remote Antarctic regions the author knew less well (doubtless through book knowledge) and I think it shows in his prose. At the end of his adventures, Clifford ends up back in business in Boston, living with his sister.

Some of the other matter Walther has chosen for reprinting in these volumes is also of much interest. Walther's series "The Magic Lantern" in the first volume is rather explicitly didactic, but "The Club Boat; or, The Fairy Archers of Islington" in the second volume is quite a good read—better, I think, than the conclusion of Paul Clifford's adventures in the same volume. A selection of Adams' rhymed couplet verse is also reprinted in the second volume. Several the poems feature figures transported through time. Optic makes some interesting speculations about travel in the mid-twentieth century—some realized, some not.

These two volumes are both enriched by being reproduced photographically from the original magazine sources, including the original illustrations. The print, while rather small, is always readable. There are helpful forwards by experts in children's literature, and good introductions and notes by the series editor, Mr. Walther.

If you want a good sample of the work of this author, so beloved by early amateur journalists for his support of their endeavors in *Oliver Optic's Magazine (Our Boys and Girls)*, these two volumes offer a good opportunity for making his acquaintance. Optic published over one hundred novels during his long writing career. At least two more titles are anticipated in the series *The Lost Works of Oliver Optic* edited by Mr. Walther.

The two titles reviewed here may be ordered via email (sylvania877@localnet.com) or by telephone (315.338.1407).

LETTER OF COMMENT

RE: the July 2011 issue of The Fossil

From: Knud Larn, incurable fan of ayjay journals

The future of ayjay archiving

It is a grand thing to wish for that massive digital archive of amateur journals, freely available online across the globe. I do think, however, that we may have to wait a very long time for that. Much more likely will be a multitude of interest-specific/person-oriented online archives, for instance a FAPA Archive, a Lovecraft Archive, a Groveman Archive, scattered across the planet. First of all there is the copyright issue to be solved (internet archiving is legally a re-publishing of the texts), then there is the whole problem of finding the actual journals, and then there is the issue of advertising the mere existence of the archive. Who really knows what happens in this area both institutionally and privately in Asia, across Europe, or somewhere on the American continent? Each time a donated collection enters my archive, I find binders with photocopies and/or discs of CD-ROM from the donating collector who apparently scanned/copied for personal use, but never told anyone about it. A great help would be an international copyright ruling stating that electronic archiving for the sake of preserving material, and for maintaining access to it, is legally ok, as long as there are no profit-making activities involved.

The enjoyment of the paper touch

I agree completely with Ken Faig, Jr. in that no pdf or scan can give the same enjoyment that the well-produced, hand-set, hand-printed journal on well-selected paper can give when holding it in the hand. However, many amateur journals outside AAPA and NAPA are not made that meticulous in the printing process, they miss the printers, and those journals could easily be scanned for an equal benefit. Personally, I do not like reading on screens, but much prefer the old-school armchair reading. I suppose this is why I continue to amass paper, even in those cases where I DO have an electronic alternative. Recently I received a CD-ROM with a complete set of the science fictional amateur publications made in Halle, Germany over the past 50 years. A private endeavour from one of the former members of the fan society there. Now, though it takes almost no space on the shelves, I didn't get around to reading the fanzines until I printed them out as a set and put them on the shelves. To me, electronic archiving is something nice when it is the only access to the journals (whether for financial reasons or for simple scarcity of the journals), not something to pursue in itself. Given the choice, I select the paper version. But then again, maybe I am just too old!

Where to go with your collection?

The most common cause for the destruction of amateur journals is not time, fire or water, but the much scarier death-by-retirement-or-relocation. Every time we need to move to a different location, we survey our piles of paper—looking intently for “what we can throw out.” Usually we do not look at other stuff in the same way. Imagine for a moment if we looked like this at the car, the furniture, our clothes, our books. But those we try to resell, give a new home, or fight the rest of the family to keep anyway. But paper is “just paper,” amateur journals are “just a hobby,” maybe even a hobby from one's past, and “nobody has any interest in these.” Terrible thoughts. Yes, here I disagree with Ken Faig, Jr. in his somewhat relaxed attitude: “This is the way it is.” It needn't be!

The reality of the matter is: There is ALWAYS a good home for amateur journals at private collectors. It is just a question of finding them and selecting the happy receiver. It can be difficult. And then one needs to make sure he/she is able to receive the material, i.e., knows where it comes from, and can find his/her way around the donated material. (Make it much easier to file, and once you are gone, the archivist is all alone in guessing.) The next obstacle is psychological. We all tend to move very quickly from “this is for the garbage can” to “I want money for this,” or “I will certainly not pay to preserve this somewhere else,” but is this really fair? Remember that your average collector is just an average person on an average salary, using all spare money to collect (probably due to some deficit in his/her early childhood) instead of going away on holidays like everybody else in society. And remember you are just ONE donor; most likely the collector has to handle several donors each year, making even the postage costs a financial challenge at times. The greater the costs, the more we on the receiving end need to cherry pick and select only those collections that substantially add to our own. Even though we would LOVE to accept all donations, and so rescue from oblivion those single items that are unique in every collection, even the smallest. Think of all this when approaching a potential donee about your collection.

Also remember that ALL of the large public collections are begun, maintained, expanded, and donated by private individuals! And most of these donated collections spend years, if not decades, in storage rooms, while we all wait for public funding for the proper archiving and registration of the material that makes it visible and accessible for other collectors. Usually collections are more accessible at even the most paranoid private collector than at your usually badly funded public collection next door!

I do not mind drowning in paper!

I am a dedicated private custodian of amateur journals. I prefer to call myself a custodian, not a collector, as I primarily attempt to preserve amateur papers for coming generations, and do not have the finances to acquire the majority of my collections through eBay, auction houses, etc. I must rely, primarily, upon donations from other, older collectors. On average I accept five-six donations per year, from the select few items (recently 50 different amateur journals with contributions from Lovecraft) to the large life-long collections that do not fit in the retirement home (recently two small truck loads of publications arrived from Sweden and the UK respectively). All items are then registered, stamped with “from the collection of <name/reference>,” individually protected in mylar sleeves, and archived at the logical spot on the shelves (i.e., FAPA-fanzines under FAPA, and the year, AAPA bundles under AAPA and the year, etc.) For regional publications outside the organization, they are filed under Country, Region and Year. This has proven the best way to access the archive when responding to the questions coming in, for fact-checking, copies of specific titles, or bibliographic listings. Currently, the archive spans 200 running meters, with a total possible space estimate of 1,000 running meters when incorporating all of the five reserved rooms in the house. So there is room for MUCH more before the archive, at my death/retirement, in some forty years time or so will be handed over to the Copenhagen University for posterity.

Naturally, as I am a resident of Denmark, the archive covers not just English-language publications, but also extensively French, German, and Scandinavian ones, plus sketchily the publications from other European nations (Poland, Holland, Spain, and Italy). The main bulk of the archive is still science fictional (in the widest possible sense, including Horror, Fantasy, Weird, etc.), as that was my only focus when I began in 1980, but in the last half-decade or so I have added amateur journals in a much wider concept. Looking more widely for the “Fan” or “Amateur” elements in them. If the word wasn’t so used by science fictionists, Fandom (= the territory of fans) would be the perfect way to describe the archive’s focus. I would very much like this wider aspect to be reflected much more in the archive’s material, adding bundles/single publications from most of the past and present APAs. It is however VERY difficult to find, when one lives so far away from the epicentre! So I rely on donations even here.

Now I know (at least I hope!) you will have many responses to the segment in the July Fossil, from collectors living much closer to you all. Probably even able to come and collect at your doorstep. So why all the bother with international mail/cargo, multiple mails, etc.? It is my sincere hope that some of you will consider the placement of your journals outside America! Here YOU can be the pioneer! To the best of my knowledge there are no such archives in Scandinavia. Help build a collection of amateur journals, located (until the day of free global online access) here! If you have material to spare/dispose of/donate, please think of me!

Kind regards,
Knud Larn
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e-mail: knudlarn@hotmail.com

Editor’s Note: I am happy to print Knud Larn’s comments on my editorial on placing amateur journalism collections in the July 2011 Fossil. His communication from as far away as Denmark shows that the Internet posting of our journal does have the potential of reaching a wide audience. If there are any other potential donees for amateur journalism collections who wish to post notice of their interest in The Fossil, I will be happy to accommodate. All arrangements are the responsibility of the donor and the donee; The

Fossil assumes no responsibility. The Fossil also remains open to more general discussions on the subject of the disposition of collections of amateur journals. Electronic journals in PDF format do enjoy one advantage over traditional paper journals: they can move virtually free of cost from one electronic archive to another, while the circulation of paper journals is uncumbered by the increasingly high costs of shipment (whether using the post office or a private carrier). The U.S. post office eliminated reasonably-priced surface mail to foreign countries in 2007. While electronic amateur journals can vanish when they lose hosting computer privileges, my prediction is that overall they will likely have a higher survival rate than traditional paper-based amateur journals.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Ken Faig, Jr.

I am very grateful to all of those persons, inside and outside our ranks, who have contributed to this issue of *The Fossil*. Our president, Guy Miller, as always, does his part to keep our venerable organization on course. Our trusty publication designer and publisher, Gary Bossler, updates us on the recent NAPA convention, and Ivan Snyder does the same for the AAPA convention. Martha Shivers has curated a wonderful tribute to her friend, poet and fellow Fossil Marion Fields Wyllie, on the occasion of Marion's one hundred fifth birthday. Marion's address appears below for any Fossils who may wish to send her individual birthday greetings. It is wonderful to reflect that Marion's exceptionally long lifetime extends back nearly to the foundation of *The Fossils* in 1904. Louise Lincoln will join Marion in the Fossil's centenarian ranks when she celebrates her one hundredth birthday in February 2012, and we have numerous other members well into their nineties. The Fossils are indeed blessed with a richness of memory and experience in the ranks of our membership.

It is always a pleasure to give space to new voices in *The Fossil*. This issue, independent scholar Peter C. Walther updates us on the subject of "Oliver Optic" (William T. Adams), who wrote prolifically for the young people of our nation and who so encouraged our hobby in its early days with the column he edited in his magazine for youth. The posting of our journal to the Internet by our webmaster David Tribby is evidently doing some good—witness the extended comments from a collector Knud Larn, from as far away as Denmark, in our current issue.

In an organization whose membership probably averages well over eighty years in age, it is inevitable that we must from time to time pay tribute to members who have departed from our midst. I join our president Guy Miller in condoling the family of Fossil Fred Liddle on his passing. Fred struggled with illness in his later years, but like Fossil Marion Fields Wyllie, always retained an "upbeat" view of life. I remember vividly sitting next to Fred and Betty at the Charlie Bush Chinese dinner at a not-too-many-years-ago AAPA convention and enjoying Fred's bright conversation and anecdotes. The Fossil benefitted from a nineteen-thirties photograph of the Blue Pencil Club which Fred contributed to our pages and is proud to have paid tribute to Fred upon the occasion of the publication of the one thousandth number of his journal *Flimsie Excuse*. While it is sad to have to say so many good-byes, we can reflect in gratitude on the many ways our departed members have enriched the amateur journalism hobby and our own lives.

The family of Jacob L. "Jake" Warner has been one of the largest contributors to the success of the venerable National Amateur Press Association over the last forty years. Jake's son David Warner completed his 2010-11 term as NAPA President at NAPA's Nashville convention, and he has been succeeded in the NAPA presidential chair by his daughter Alice (Warner) Brosey. The Fossil wishes Alice well in her 2011-12 presidential term and we are honored to have her and her husband Marc Brosey on our Fossil membership roll.

Finally, *The Fossil* takes pride in noting that we have reached our three-hundred fiftieth number with the publication of this issue. Members with a numerical bent will note that we ought to have reached our four hundredth number when we completed our centennial year in 2004; however, *The Fossil* has always been a volunteer endeavor, through good times and bad, so that our publication history is marked with several lacunae. We have missed no quarterly number during the seven years of my editorship largely through the endeavors of our publishers Guy Miller and Gary Bossler. It is of course an honor to work with a journal with as long and venerable a publishing history as *The Fossil*. If interest in the history of amateur publishing in all its forms—traditional paper publication and non-traditional electronic publication, publication through amateur press associations and independent publication—persists, I have hope that *The Fossil*, in some form, can continue its mission.

As Guy Miller notes in his President's Report, our declining membership may mean that we will have to cease paper publication of *The Fossil* in the not-too-distant future. I hope that our leadership will consider continuing electronic publication of a *Fossil Annual* so long as a core of motivated friends and volunteers remains, with sufficient means to pay for space on the Internet. Members with Internet access could read our publication on-line or print it for reading and filing, if they prefer. Members without Internet access could still obtain paper copies at cost. Many special interest organizations do make do with an annual publication and the resultant workload reduction can sometimes facilitate the survival of an organization with limited resources.

My own feeling is that even if we shrink to a few dozen dedicated volunteer members and friends, we could eventually witness a renaissance of interest in the history of amateur journalism among the reading community at large and in particular among academics. Perhaps a *Fossil Annual* which persisted as an electronic journal through the dedication of a small core of volunteers and donors might eventually secure academic sponsorship and even resume paper publication at some future date. For now, of course, our principal mission is to continue the venerable publication which has been passed to our hands from our predecessors in the amateur journalism hobby.

I hope that the Fossils who honored the memory of Oliver Optic at our 1917 reunion would still recognize our journal and its focus today. It is really our solidarity with the generations gone by which characterizes the special mission of The Fossils. The active hobby organizations in our field—AAPA, NAPA, APA and others—have naturally a primary concern with their ongoing viability. As an organization of dedicated hobby printers, APA has a core focus which will probably keep it going through ups and downs. There will probably always be hobby letterpress printers so long as presses, type, ink and paper remain. Faced with the increasing costs of all forms of paper publication, traditional amateur press organizations like AAPA and NAPA—and more specialized apas as well—face starker challenges. The increase in dues experienced by both AAPA and NAPA in 2011 poses particular challenges for organizations whose membership is dominated by older folks on fixed incomes. If they are to attract younger members (with their own problems of limited financial resources early in life), I think the amateur press associations will need to be open to innovations like electronic publishing.

The Fossils, I think, are by no means indifferent to the many challenges facing the traditional amateur journalism hobby today. Many of these same challenges—declining and aging membership, increasing cost of paper publication—affect The Fossils as well. Looking back over the decades, we can, however, say that challenges have been met and overcome in the past. Whether our hobby would be open to persons of all races was an issue fought and overcome in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The Fossils were proud to have the black Roman Catholic priest Charles R. Uncles on our membership rolls early in the twentieth century. However, The Fossils have not always been on the right side of the challenges facing our hobby. The Fossils fought to exclude adults from active participation in the amateur journalism hobby early in the twentieth century, and thankfully lost that battle. The point is, we have seen fortunes wax and wane in the amateur journalism hobby. The only constant appears to be: be prepared for change!

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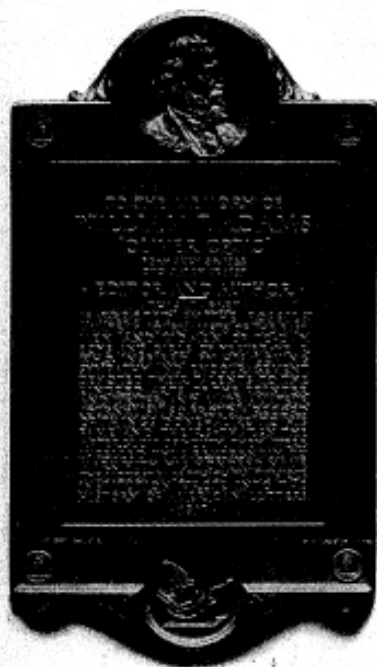
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THE FOSSILS

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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. (The Library of Amateur Journalism Collection is not yet open for use at University of Wisconsin at Madison.) 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.



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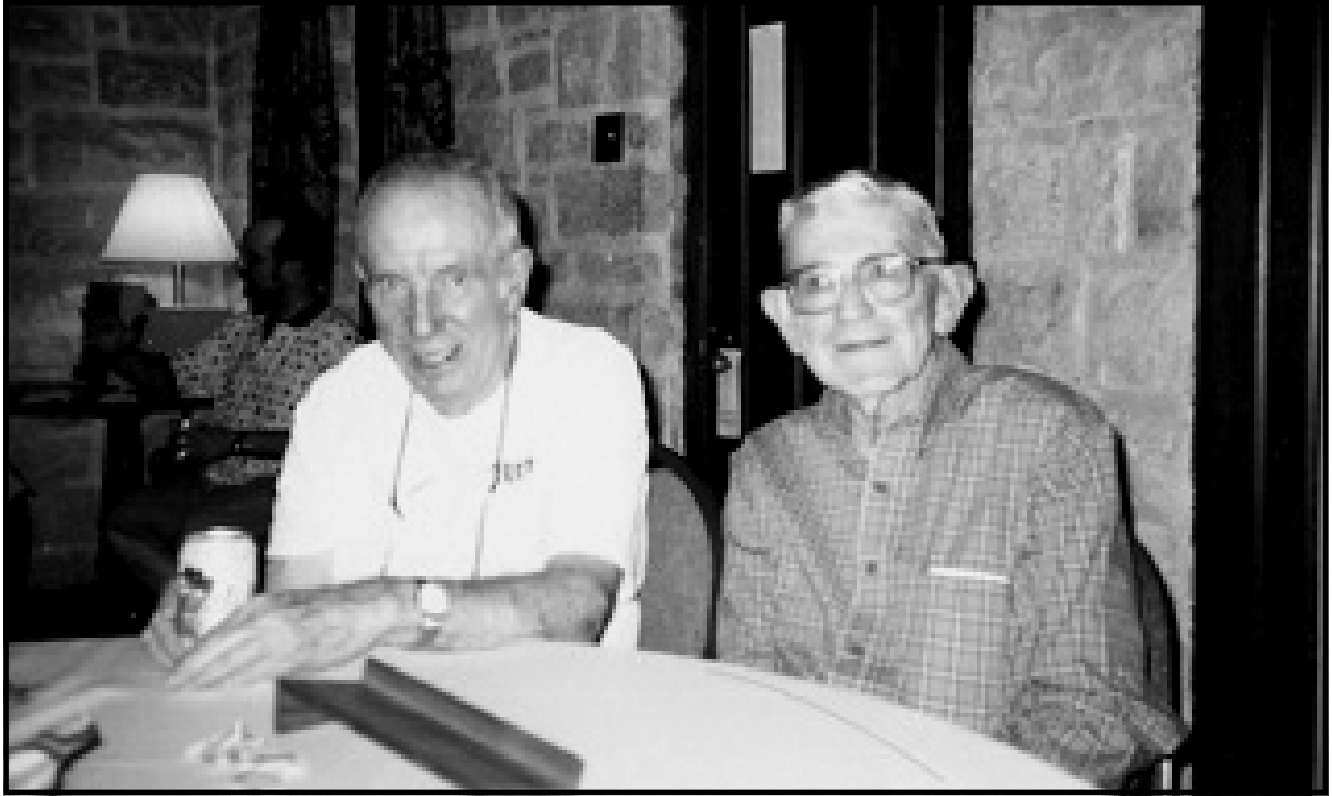
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Congratulations to Alice Brosey
on her election as President
of NAPA for 2011-2012



Guy Miller with Liz and Dave Tribby on his recent trip to the West.



Guy Miller with Fred Liddle in 2002.



**CONGRATULATIONS TO
MARION FIELDS WYLLIE
UPON THE OCCASION OF HER
ONE-HUNDRED FIFTH BIRTHDAY
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Above picture taken when she was 103