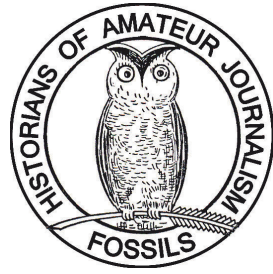


The



Fossil

Official Publication of *The Fossils*, *The Historians of Amateur Journalism*

Volume III, Number 2, Whole Number 362, Sunnyvale, California, January 2015

Happy 100th Birthday, Martha Shivvers

by Dianna Shivvers

A PROLIFIC WRITER of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, devotionals, and newspaper columns, Martha Elizabeth Sherwood Shivvers, born February 13, 1915, also belonged to many writing groups and organizations. As evidenced by the numerous publications of her writing and the volume of awards she's received, she has been highly respected by her peers and readers.

Martha's writing is filled with the loves of her life: family, children, nature, faith, history, as well as her own ponderings about self, thoughts, life challenges, longings, acceptance of shortcomings, and nurturing the spirit through this meandering, inexplicable thing we call life.

In the midst of enduring The Depression, working, taking care of a household, raising four children, and caring for an ailing mate, somehow Martha was able to write hundreds of poems, decades worth of columns, numerous short stories and non-fiction essays; discover, join and enthusiastically support multiple writing groups and organizations; write letters of encouragement to fellow writers and struggling admirers; and still make time to connect personally with six grandchildren and fourteen great-grandchildren; create an unbelievable number of hand-sewn quilts; garden; and bake yummies from scratch (like the best ever chocolate cake, sweet rolls, Christmas candies and the most amazing fried chicken my young daughter has tasted).

This February marks Martha's 100th birthday, and she's still creating poems, although in need of someone else to write them down as a pen in hand has become challenging.

While researching this history of my grandmother's writing life, I came across a letter she sent me a few years ago that is more telling than anything I could say, and



Photo of Martha Shivvers taken about 2004

thought you might enjoy reading it. I've included it below.

Before the letter, though, a few more words from me. I feel lucky. Lucky because at forty-six I still have a grandmother who is living; lucky because my twenty-four-year-old daughter has had many years getting to know how incredible her great-grandmother is and that she's one of few her age to know a great-grandparent; lucky because my grandmother and I both share a passion that is dear to each of us – writing; lucky that I've had the joy and the honor of discovering my grandmother in ways that maybe not so many people do – through her writings – yet, perhaps I'm being too lofty...

What I Know About Grandma's Writing

Since I was quite young, Grandma and I have written, by hand, many, many letters back and forth to each other. (I have boxes of them, that I treasure). I wrote often of what was happening in my life – work, relationships, school, my daughter... Grandma wrote back about the birds that visited, coming back with the spring thaw – their reds, oranges, browns, golds – their trickery and sometimes thievery; about the bulbs in her gardens breaking winter's frosty, solid ground and displaying their bold colors, strong despite the cold, wind and ice; about her day-to-day life – baking, gardening, working at the library, sometimes a family tale; and on occasion, she would share her latest writing – a poem, a story, a column from the paper.

As a writer myself, enthralled with books and expression of the past, today, the comings and what I would dream or think of, I was always intrigued by what Grandma had written, and fascinated that she was send-

ing it to me in “published” booklet form. But of course, life was busy – work, school, a young but growing child... During those times I enjoyed her writings, but didn’t give much thought to what writing meant to Grandma or what role it played in her life.

My true learning began in 2004. I was working for a small company that “published” children’s writing into hardbound books, fully typeset and with the child’s own illustrations. Working there, I had access to create books myself, which at that point in time was challenging and very costly for an amateur author. Grandma’s stories and poetry collections had always come to me in paperback, small chapbook styles, and sometimes in her own type or hand on paper. I thought she might enjoy having all her writing compiled in a hardbound book, and since I had access to our company’s equipment and discount pricing I could make that happen. So... hoping to surprise her with a gift for her upcoming 90th birthday, I wrote a letter asking many questions about how writing found a way into her life, what it meant to her, did she have other writings I wasn’t aware of...

The Memory Quilt

The colorful quilt on the spare bed
was completed just one week ago;
blocks holding memories of the past,
warming folks with comfort and show.

Materials were chosen from garments,
worn, too good to throw away;
large pieces, scraps and snippets
awaiting another display.

Tails of Dad’s blue work shirts,
some of Susie’s yellow dress,
snippets of Beth’s green jumper,
torn in play at recess.

The brown and tan of little Jim’s shirt;
his favorite of all the rest,
was sewn between Grandpa’s red hankie
and Grandma’s gold housedress.

Mom’s navy blue skirt bound the edges
of the pieces sewn by hand.
Prayers whispered with each stitch
completed a mosaic of love, family and land.

Remembering

The clapboard house, rustic, weathered and grey,
a porch whose railings held many a child
in past years, rests forlorn with steps that sway
and nestles among the shade trees grown wild.
Lilacs nod like weather vanes,
empty caverns that held window panes,
voices, now still, once echoing walls
are memories stirred by families’ recalls.

Wow! I was surprised a month or so later to receive a box (about twenty-four inches square) filled with journals, books, fiction, non-fiction, poems, awards and on and on... not even including the many years of newspaper columns she wrote. I’d had no idea how very much she’d written. I’m guessing perhaps beyond herself and maybe a few peers, no one did. This project quickly became overwhelming, yet still so important to me.

As I perused the box of writing I realized I could not possibly accomplish what I had initially planned, after all, everything was in print, not digital – I’d need to retype and format everything, not to mention finding all those various publications and seeking permissions to reprint her writing. So, I decided to focus on her fiction and non-fiction writing as a first volume with the plan to put together the poetry later as volume two. It was October 2004 when I started and her 90th birthday was a few short months away in February 2005, but with many early mornings and late nights I was able to complete the book and have it printed in time for a surprise birthday visit. The book finished with 338 pages and included 41 fictional pieces and 42 non-fiction pieces.

Many years passed since that project and I had the best of intentions of creating the poetry book. But, perhaps much like in Grandma’s poem, “Our Busy Worlds,” it was good intention, yet other living always seemed to interfere.

Last year Grandma turned 99. At long last, my wish to put her poetry into a second hardbound collection was completed and given as a birthday gift. Like the first time, many hours were spent typing, proofing, formatting pages, organizing a structure, researching, writing letters and emails asking for reprint permissions... It was worth every long hour.

In total, the poetry book with all the notations and table of contents finished out at 327 pages, with 228 poems, 26 devotionals and historical information about the organizations she belonged to. Within it, I hope I was able to include every poem she’d written up to that date, and also properly credit every small amateur press, publisher, journal, and awarding organization.

The process of putting this compilation together was amazing. There is no experience like touching, reading, retyping, reliving another writer’s life’s work. It’s as if her words, passions, hurts, loves, thoughts and remembrances would flow in to me from my eyes and all the way through me then back out my fingers to the page. I feel like I experienced so much more than if just working with text on a computer. Perhaps that’s just the writer in me, but I am honored to view Grandma’s life in a deeper, perhaps more intimate way than I could have otherwise.

Thank you, Grandma, for sharing your precious writing with me and allowing me the opportunity to give back to you with these books. I only hope I’ve provided your “creative children” the honor they deserve.

Letter from Martha

October 19, 2004

My Dear Dianna,

This morning a box was mailed to you holding writings – we didn't try to photo-copy any here as the machines do not always reproduce well. Good luck in your perusing.

Since my voice gets scratchy and hoarse it is best to answer your questions by writing instead of on a tape as you requested.

As long as I can remember I've wanted to write. Even when in grade school in the country, little stories were written, tucked away and eventually disappeared.

As a sophomore in the little high school in Harvey, 28 pupils in all; two in the Sophomore Class, a three-act-play was written, performed in the gym, then in the Community Room in the coal-mining town of Pershing three miles from our home. I was 13 years old; don't remember now what the play was about nor was it kept.

Not getting the education wanted in this little school our father allowed me – and the siblings following – to go to Knoxville High School – junior and senior years – where I graduated in 1931 in a class of, I think, 65. The two oldest brothers had graduated at Harvey and were in athletic programs.

While we were growing up on the farm and washing evening dishes, it was often story telling time – I also made up little stories to tell young children when working in their homes as a “maid” or “hired girl” to earn money to go to summer school classes at college (Simpson in Indianola). Then Sunday School and church plays were written for special programs as well as when teaching in Rural Country Schools for three years. None have been kept, but some were submitted to a teacher's magazine and rejected.

It was in 1939, living again on a farm as wife and mother, when my first column appeared in the *Knoxville Journal*, a weekly newspaper, titled, “A Farmer's Wife's Chatter.” Pay? Free copies of the paper. When World War II brought rationing the columns were dropped for awhile. The move from the country into town later found me writing, “From Here and There” columns with small compensation in money. Then that column was dropped.

Through church work, religious writings came to my attention. It was my mother who encouraged me to write for *The Upper Room*, a Methodist daily meditations magazine; a minister introduced me to *The Secret Place*, and *The Christian*, materials published for Christian churches. It was notices in newspapers that led me to the state poetry contest with accepted poetry being included in *Lyrical Iowa* along with a state workshop meeting of learning. Meeting new friends there, one encouraged me to join Iowa Poetry Day as well as United Amateur Press (UAP). The poetry group had meetings whereby one's poems were critiqued, someone of authority gave lessons, there

were also contests. A friend in those poetry groups invited me to become a member of The Rhymers, but the other members first had to vote “yea” or “nay;” they were all “yeas,” so I became one of the group.

The Rhymers started when Thomas Edison sought ways for talented hard of hearing and deaf people to communicate their talents with Round Robin letters and poetry for members to critique. I'm not sure how many members there were in the early years, but as time went on the group had only six. One person was to be “Captain of the Good Ship Rhymers” for 2 years, assigning works to be included in Bundles to be mailed. By the time I was

In Retrospect

In the land of Iowa,
where the Fox and Sioux one roamed,
along the lush banks of English creek,
along the timbered banks of Whitebreast stream,
among the forest of oak and walnut,
among the forest of elm and hickory,
amidst the grape and elderberry,
amidst the wild plum and blackberry,
grew violets with their perky faces,
lamb's-tongue and bright sweet william.
grew wild strawberries, sweet and juicy,
and tender mustard greens.
Ran the coyote, fox and rabbit,
lived the skunk, muskrat and chipmunk,
climbed the squirrel, the 'coon and 'possum.
Sang the robin, bluebird and cardinal,
sang the meadowlark, blue jay and blackbird,
and screeched the owl, the one of wisdom.

Now lies a region plowed and baring
Man's cultured crops, another's faring.

Go

Go into the fields and sow,
it makes no difference if the
seeds are small or large.
Remember
the tiny mustard seed and
how it flourishes.
Remember
it is within you to plant,
be it seeds of
acceptance,
patience,
tolerance, or
forgiveness.

Sow that you might reap the harvest
of peace within yourself,
happiness with your fellowman
and
assurance that you have
done your best.

asked to belong in the late 1970s, I think, Ina Whitkop had written a book *Twenty Five Lessons on Poetry*, holding members strictly to the rules and the critiques spared no “feelings.” It was a learning time. At that time only the Captain knew who wrote the poems as she had to retype them sans author names, thus the stern critiques weren’t personal. Years have passed – some ladies have died, a few new ones didn’t remain in the group and now there are five of us seeing the “handwriting” on the wall since the three in Canada, Marion, 97, Helen, 86, Dorothy, 82, while still writing are facing health problems. Grace, 68, in Michigan is the latest “aboard” – and I’m 89, Captain for two years now. But each of us now suggests assignments for the year – the critiques are mostly praise and each lady’s work is known.

It was a Rhymer friend – who lived in Michigan, and known only through our friendly letters – who sponsored me to become a member of the National Amateur Press Association, NAPA, and a fellow NAPA member who asked me to become a member of The Fossils. The UAP, the NAPA and The Fossils require yearly dues, but the UAP has disbanded due to elderly leaders not able to get and keep enough members contributing – I’ve been membership chair of The Fossils for 7 years.

Each organization has brought learning, widening the scope of imagination. In NAPA are writers, printers from

By My Side

Cuddling my special doll and rocking,
I impatiently dreamed;
how long before I can explore the thrills of life?
Then dolls were put aside,
boys were eyed
from afar, at first,
then I became a bride.

The hills of trouble that followed,
and the valleys of deep despair
were traveled with faith.

The children grew, and left home;
illness claimed my mate.

The doll of yesteryear sits with me, again,
in my rocking chair.

Johnnie’s Magic

He mixed the mass like a potter
adding water
a clump of weeds
handful of seeds
then with a tall stick from the yard
he twisted hard
with a crooked smile
all of the while
he answered questions that I asked:
What is this task?
He gasped four words
SOUP FOR THE BIRDS!

the old school of printing as well as computer issues, and it is through some of them that many of my writings have appeared. They don’t charge for the printing and some send the authors extra copies – to the man who printed all of the little stories in booklets, I’d send a few dollars as a thank you.

The Women’s Club in Knoxville, joined after retiring from office work in Des Moines, provided avenues of social learning and District and State contests of writings of poetry and essays.

Then my youngest sister, Nora Lee Ingle, introduced me to The Pen Women of America. It is a very prestigious group (National) with strict guidelines. Proof has to be provided of published works for pay, to be accepted. Letters are for writers; Music for composing and expands to the theater; Art for painting. The story written of a Knoxville lady’s life – at her request, *Down Memory Lane*, the newspaper columns, articles in *Kitchen-Klatter* and some other articles winning monetary awards allowed me to become a member. There were four meetings a year – all learning sessions as well as fellowships. The dues were high (\$45.00 a year). When the time came that I couldn’t attend the meetings feeling the need to remain at home, and not receiving any benefits from the group, I dropped out. However, I still retain membership and pay dues in the D.A.R., Daughters of the American Revolution, even though not being able to be active, for the honor of having a distant Sherwood relative serve in the Revolutionary War. False pride? Maybe.

Through the association of people, getting varied ideas and scopes, through the discipline of rules, from rejections, have come learning – many times with heartaches. Then, sometimes, when everything looked all wrong and the bad seemed to overrule the good, a compliment or an acceptance brought out rays of hope again, stirring another try at something. One time I’d sent many devotions to *The Secret Place* at a time. Before long a letter came stating they were accepting eleven for publications – Joy was difficult to curtail and I told many about it. Then the bubble burst. Another letter arrived stating an error had been made – they were accepting one and returning ten. Oh, my! Many times after the rejected feature – poem or story or article – had lain awhile with the criticisms, it, or they, would be rewritten using suggested ideas discovering more pleasing and interesting products.

As time goes by, I’m needing the little handbooks of synonyms and antonyms, dictionaries, right by the writing material. Even then misspellings are made. The same about punctuation. In one of the copies of *Campagne* sent to you in a NAPA bundle in the box you will receive soon, is a sentence regarding commas: “Lenore walked on her head, a little higher than usual” Of course the comma should be after the “on” and eliminated after head. Could it be some writers would use the first way? Maybe.

One lesson we had at a meeting was in regard to the importance of verbs, adverbs, adjectives, and nouns. For

instance, “Make your verbs vibrate with actions, the ad-verbs and adjectives make you feel the heat of the sun for instance, the number of people who gathered for the party. Tell the name of bird that was singing, the color of the Aspen leaves that trembled to the ground, the tingle that went down your spine when the rumbling, tumbling clouds brought a tornado.”

Sometimes I've been asked to give lessons by reading some of the poems or essays or a story. One day a lady timidly asked, “How much money do you get with each acceptance?” When told there was very little, she responded, “You'll never get rich that way!”

My theory on that matter is that wealth doesn't always have to be monetary.

When an idea comes, and they do come at very inopportune times, either notes are made on the first piece of paper available, or whatever is being done at the time is put aside and a first draft is jotted down. Some sleepless nights have produced an entire feature only to have it wiped out of the mind after a few hours of sleep. At times, though, good ideas have formulated at those times then gone on to become a story or article.

There have been times when I've thought a poem or story was good only to be told what all was wrong with it. Then there have been times when what I considered mediocre to have “Best you've written” attached to it. It's in the eyes of the reader. An example: a Rhyming assignment one time was to write a sonnet. This particular poetry pattern is a specialty of three of the ladies – not me. I tried, writing *Iowa, in Retrospect*, sounding, when read, somewhat like *Hiawatha*. The critiques weren't kind. It was sent to one of the printers in NAPA who printed it in a very nice fashion – someone entered it in the poetry Laureate contest, winning! The judge, usually a college prof for writing, wrote glowing comments! See, it's in the eyes of the reader.

You are probably wondering how I got to these meetings if I was working in an office in Des Moines. They were always on Saturdays. Many times Melvin came down and took me back to Des Moines then brought me home. Later, friends picked me up and sometimes I paid a friend to take me. The family was very supportive and encouraging, but rarely read what I wrote. The only objection came when I was writing, *Down Memory Lane*, the story of a local Knoxville lady who insisted that I write it. She was 84, almost blind, had a keen memory, a lot of diaries and albums – and a sharp tongue. I had to be away from our home quite a bit taking notes from her, but always walked back to our home at noon to get Woodrow's meal and evening meal, typed up the notes into a story form, then read it to the lady the next morning. More often than not a rewrite was required. She had said at first, “It will only be 50 to 70 pages.” It turned out to be about 185, including genealogies of her family and her husband's family, which I was to help her gather. Also included are pictures of all family members known to have served in

wars. The money agreed upon at first, \$100.00, became unthinkable when one of her daughters came home, read the book and demanded rewrites! The sample book had been printed, not the final additions. From that time I said the pay would be by the hour. The daughter, a teacher in Arizona, was harsh in her criticisms demanding certain episodes of her family be taken out, some rewritten. It's sad that the oldest daughter didn't have that opportunity, as I tried to convince the mother that certain incidents shouldn't be written in a book. That daughter's reaction was bitter and sharp – toward me. The book was paper bound, priced at \$25.00 each, and letters went out to each person mentioned in the book to buy one so she could pay the local printer. My final pay? Begrudgingly the \$100.00 was agreed upon, 5 books (one for me and one for each of our children, \$125.00) and she said I would have to take a quilt for the other \$100.00. The real reward to me is that the National D.A.R. Library in Washington, D.C. has that book, now rebound in hardback and indexed, on their shelves. I'm not sure if she left my name on it or not, but I know and that's enough. The book is in the box you are receiving.

As time went on and Certificates of Award were received for various writings, they were eventually tucked away, treasuring them in my heart. At first the big ones were framed and put on the wall of my office on S. 3rd Street. No one noticed them, so it was best to just tuck them away. Some certificates are for poetry – some are for writings in UAP and NAPA. In NAPA, some readers submitted printed stories or poems for contests that were judged by high school or college teachers – the materials were taken from the present years – I never entered any on my own.

How have I persevered? Failure – complete failure – just isn't in my vocabulary. Rejections, while suppressing the muse for awhile, have a tendency to make me work harder.

Our Special Hours

Spending many days of youthful leisure
filling our memories with fun and pleasure,
we roamed the farm and round about,
answering each other's eager shouts,
when a special treasure was found
in brook, or tree, or on the ground.
Each place was named, like Old Skunk Hill,
Stately Elm, or Clear Water Rill;
Sour Haw Tree beside the Frog's Ol' Pond,
Red Winged Beauties on a cattail frond.
We slid down the wall of Steep Clay Bank,
then followed the leader over grasses rank.
Splashing up streams for pebbles, our gold,
we found some arrowheads in sandy mold.
We carried home wealth long to remember,
those summer months, from June to September.

Writing has been very important in my life. It is an outlet into another world. Many, many friendships have been made; friendships that at times seem closer and more understanding than folks known in person. The addresses cross the United States, some in Canada, one in England, one in Tasmania, Australia. Being the membership chairman for The Fossils for the past seven years brings correspondence that is treasured. Also, the 10 inch statuette presented for "Accomplishments reflecting the finest traditions of The Fossils, Inc. – 2002."

Love you,
Grandma

Last thoughts from Dianna

A copy of Grandma's poetry book is shelved in the Iowa Women's Archives at the University of Iowa. If you're ever in Ames and interested in learning more through her poems, please visit. I will be reprinting the fiction/non-fiction book soon and hope to include it there as well. Also, if anyone is interested in a digital copy of the

poetry book, I would be more than happy to share it. Please email me at dshivvers@gmail.com.

On a personal note, Grandma had a severe stroke this past November. She's doing fairly well – very alert, cognizant and still crafting poems. Unfortunately though, due to the severity of the stroke she's now living in a nursing home. I know it would mean so much to her if anyone wants to send a birthday card. Although the family is not planning a big celebration because she didn't want one, we are trying to shower her with cards and written love. Cards can be sent to:

Martha Shivvers
c/o West Ridge Nursing & Rehab Center
1904 West Howard Street
Knoxville, IA 50138

The poems by Martha accompanying this article were selected by Dianna. They include Dianna's favorites and those given praise by others, along with poems that she thinks reflect things Martha loved and admired. This final poem was written by Dianna for the book she described:

Keeping Her Self

Martha the writer,
Martha the woman,
Martha the daughter. . . sister. . . wife. . .
mother. . . grandma. . . greatgrandmama;
farmer, quilter, cook, planter, reader,
teacher, birder, giver, thinker, writer. . .
Writer, thinker - thinker, writer.
Wherein lies this woman so complex?

She kneels amidst the fragrant blooms
humble to the toils of weeding and pruning,
dabbing in bits of sustenance,
soils bursting with fertility
with ages of the careful observer.
She grows her stories from seed,
coveted seed from days long gone;
seed long stored, fingered with soft cotton gloves;
seed selected when growing season sings
of seedlings strong against harsh summer storms;
seeds with wisdom to tell the tales
of mother and daughters
of father and sons
of family whose seeds grow saplings to storytellers,
with roots deep to stand the fiercest winds,
roots that praise and thank
and bless the day for dawning;
another day to think and write,
and toil for better blooms.
Blooms burst forth another tale.

Martha the writer,
Martha the thinker,
Martha the tiller of tales.

Me

Who is this one with face so dour,
and countenance sour,
eyes that frown,
and a smile upside down?
Can it be me?

Who is this one so carefree and gay
pushing away responsibilities
galore as they approach the door of life.
Can it be me?

Who is this one so
full of God's grace
that love shines from the face
radiating a shine
of self-assurance divine?
Please, let that be me.

Dreaming Versus Reality

It will never happen to me, I said,
watching the old folks tottering by,
why, it's almost like they're already dead,
feet shuffling, hands trembling, tears in their eyes.
The stories they tell I've heard ten times before,
(each time they are told they get bigger);
can't they remember, don't they know the score?
(It's embarrassing to hear them twitter!)
When I grow old I'm going to be different;
I'll keep all my faculties, then some;
I'll remember names, dates, be confident,
my stride will be graceful, sturdy, aplomb.

Someone called, dear, I've forgotten their name.
Be a lamb, please, help me find my cane.

—DDS

The Future of the Library of Amateur Journalism: Challenges and Opportunities

by Ken Faig, Jr.

BY THE TIME THESE lines go to press, the Library of Amateur Journalism (LAJ) will have marked its tenth anniversary at University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW). LAJ departed its long-time home in Stayton, Oregon, in a Yellow Truck trailer on December 21, 2004, and arrived in Madison, Wisconsin, on a frigid December 30, 2004. Mike Horvat and I are now the only survivors of the Fossil committee that wrestled with the future of LAJ after the owners of the Paris Mill complex in Stayton put us on notice that LAJ's then home was going to be demolished. The other members of the committee, now deceased, were Lee Hawes, Jerry Killie and Stan Oliner. For a number of years now, Fossil Barry Schrader has been making an annual visit to UW Special Collections to keep channels of communication open between The Fossils and the University.

As Dave Tribby reported in our last issue, AAPA president Peter Schaub and his board have launched a new drive to put financial muscle behind LAJ. AAPA donated \$2,000 toward current LAJ expenses, and The Fossils donated \$1,000. Additional donations by individual Fossils brought the donations toward current expenses to over \$4,000 by the end of 2014. In addition, AAPA will match donations by individual AAPA members up to \$500. I hope that the UW librarians will report to AAPA and The Fossils sometime in 2015 on the work which these donations have made possible.

Even more exciting, from my point of view, AAPA donated \$2,000 toward establishing a Leland M. Hawes, Jr. Memorial Endowment Fund for LAJ. The UW Foundation minimum for an endowment fund is \$10,000. The Fossil board voted to match the AAPA donation to the Hawes LAJ Fund, so the funding effort is starting out with 40% of the minimum funding already in place. I hope that donations by individual amateur journalists and by amateur journalism organizations will make possible the achievement of the minimum funding during calendar year 2015. However, the UW Foundation has not imposed any time deadline on us for meeting the minimum \$10,000 funding goal. Lee Hawes exemplified what it means to be an amateur journalist, both with his long-running *Gator Growl* and his gentlemanly presence at amateur journalism conventions. He was historically a generous donor to LAJ in his own right, donating \$2,000 from his own funds when LAJ was at New York University. Your donation to the Hawes LAJ Fund will not only help to provide for the future of LAJ at UW but will also pay well-deserved tribute to the memory of one of the great amateur journalists of all time.

Realistically speaking, an endowment fund of \$10,000 can generate an annual income of perhaps \$500 in the current investment environment. That may seem like a mere drop in the bucket, but an endowment fund, however modest, will help to enhance LAJ's institutional presence at UW. The very existence of the Hawes LAJ Fund will show that the hobby has a strong interest in the well-being and the development of LAJ at UW. I hope you will consider making a donation—whatever is within your means—to the Hawes LAJ Fund at UW during 2015. There are two ways for Fossils to donate—either by sending their donations to Fossil treasurer Tom Parson or by making their donations electronically (through a credit card charge) directly on the UW Foundation website. The UW Foundation website accepts donations as small as \$5 and sends an electronic receipt for your charitable donation sufficient for tax purposes. More explicit instructions for donating can be found elsewhere in this issue of *THE FOSSIL*. Either way you choose to donate, be sure to indicate whether you want your donation to go toward current LAJ expenses or the Hawes LAJ Fund.

I was also pleased to receive a visit from Ben Strand, the UW Foundation's new development director for campus libraries. Ben worked closely with Peter Schaub and his AAPA board to get the funding drives for current LAJ expenses and the Hawes LAJ Fund going. He is full of energy and well-attuned to the cultural importance of LAJ.

Institutional collections of amateur journals are beginning to receive the scholarly attention they deserve. Ben left me with a copy of the UW-Madison Libraries' *Friends News* for spring 2014, which you can access using the following link:

library.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/NewsletterSpring2014ForWeb.pdf

Included are not only an excellent illustrated article on LAJ written by UW Special Collections curator Robin E. Rider but also an article by graduate student Jessica Isaac describing her own research using LAJ. I highly commend these articles to your attention. Other scholars have done noteworthy work based on the fine collection of nineteenth century amateur journals at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Mike Horvat made a number of early efforts to obtain funding while LAJ was under his curatorship in 1980-2004, but it's difficult for a privately owned and housed collection to attract institutional funding. The University of Iowa recently announced that they will digitize all 10,000 items which comprise the fanzine collection donated by the estate of Rusty Hevelin.

Ben Strand pointed out to me that there are potential opportunities to attract institutional money for LAJ now that the collection is well-established as a component of the UW library system, housed in the Special Collections Department in Madison. Perhaps it is not a mere pipe dream that LAJ—or a substantial component of LAJ—could become available in digitized form to scholars, amateur journalists and other interested parties at some time in the future. The Hawes LAJ Fund—assuming that our funding drive is successful—will help to show that the amateur journalism hobby has a financial stake in the continued development of LAJ. I think that the success of the Hawes LAJ Fund will show that the hobby not only cared enough to preserve this collection and to transport it halfway across the continent from Oregon to Wisconsin, but also remains interested in the continued development of LAJ. By the way, \$10,000 is only the minimum for a UW libraries endowment fund. Nothing says that we cannot collectively contribute \$25,000, \$50,000 or even more to the Hawes LAJ Fund if our means allow us to do so.

Aside from LAJ's founder Edwin Hadley Smith (1869-1944), Mike Horvat has probably devoted the most time, money and energy to the preservation and the development of LAJ. Mike was born in 1946, two years after the death of the original collector, and like me entered mainstream amateur journalism via science fiction fandom. In 1980 he made a strong case to Fossil President E. Sherman Cole and his board that a return to private custodianship was the best decision for LAJ at the time. Mike once wrote that it was important to think big when it comes to a collection as significant as LAJ. A \$250,000 gift—generating an annual income of \$12,500—could provide for an annual resident fellowship to do research using LAJ. A \$1,000,000 gift—generating an annual income of \$50,000—could provide for a full-time cataloger for LAJ. After the collection was fully cataloged, this income could provide for collection development or conservation expenses. Or, it could provide a strong beginning for a digitization project. A \$2,500,000 gift—generating an annual income of \$125,000—could provide for a fully credentialed Edwin Hadley Smith Memorial Librarian for LAJ. A \$5,000,000 gift could provide for digitization of all 250,000+ items comprising LAJ. These are all my “guess-timates,” and are not based on any official information provided by UW Foundation. The sky is the limit when it comes to dreaming.

Even if the Hawes LAJ Fund never exceeds the UW Foundation \$10,000 minimum, it will make LAJ an endowed collection with some financial muscle behind it. As a hobby, we will have gone beyond preserving LAJ for one hundred years (1904-2004) and delivering it in more than three hundred boxes to UW-Madison at the end of 2004. In establishing the Hawes LAJ Fund, we will have paid well-deserved tribute to the memory of Leland M. Hawes, Jr. We will also have provided for an approximate \$500

annual income toward expenses associated with LAJ. All great endeavors start with modest beginnings. Perhaps potential institutional donors brought into play by the UW Foundation will take note of our modest beginning and direct even more significant monies toward the development of LAJ.

The year 2014 was a year of many changes for me. In addition to assuming the presidency of The Fossils, I have had to get used to being retired after a forty-year working career as an actuary. My disabled sister, whom I had been looking out for since she became ill over twenty-five years ago, passed away at the end of November. In the spring, I will need to take her cremated remains down to Cincinnati for burial next to those of our parents.

I hope to make a visit to UW Special Collections in Madison sometime during 2015 and report back to the membership on the LAJ collection. The first ten years of LAJ in Madison have witnessed important progress. When LAJ celebrates its centenary at UW-Madison on December 30, 2104, it is my hope that LAJ will have become a vital part of our common cultural heritage—for scholars, for amateur journalists, for readers at large. Perhaps a digitized image of any component of the collection will be instantly available via any computer anywhere in the world. We can only dream about what will be accomplished over the next ninety years. As Mike Horvat once advised, it is important to think big when it comes to LAJ. Part of thinking big is to look beyond our own lifetimes toward a future which will continue to be enriched by the collection which Edwin Hadley Smith assembled, and which Mike Horvat and others worked so hard to protect and to preserve.

When I think of LAJ, I always think first of all of the bound volumes of amateur journals for the period 1850-1942 originally assembled by Edwin Hadley Smith. Smith paid the Salvation Army's New York City bindery \$250 to manufacture these volumes. This was precisely the price which The Fossils paid to Smith for the collection when we purchased LAJ in 1916. These volumes were proudly housed in the headquarters of The Fossils in New York City until they were transferred to the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, PA, in 1935. After a thirty-year stay at the Franklin Institute, the volumes traveled back to New York City to become part of the collections of New York University, after undergoing a period of evaluation and organization by Stan Oliner in 1964-1967. Then, after a stay of a dozen years, they travelled to Stayton, Oregon, for preservation by Fossil Librarian Mike Horvat. (An aborted microfilming effort intervened, but virtually all of LAJ had arrived in Stayton by 1982.) For the long term, now that LAJ is housed at UW-Madison, it may make sense to disperse the contents of the bound volumes to acid-free folders, for the sake of preservation. Perhaps this could be accomplished as part of a digitization project. We are fortunate that difficult decisions like this will be in the hands of the professional librarians and conserva-

tors at UW-Madison Special Collections. Amateur journalists of today might not recognize LAJ as it will exist in 2104. My prediction is that LAJ will be a more important cultural resource when it celebrates its centenary at UW-Madison in 2104 than it is today—whatever the future fortunes of the amateur journalism hobby may be. Perhaps LAJ at UW-Madison Special Collections will eventually expand its mission to preserve amateur journalism as conducted in electronic venues, as well as traditional paper formats.

Before I close, I want to take note again of the one hundredth birthday celebrations of two of our Fossil members: Martha E. Shivers on February 13, 2015 and Charles H. Bloomer, Jr., on March 27, 2015. Anyone who wishes to send individual greetings can find their addresses in *THE FOSSIL* for October 2014. The Fossils thank both of them for their loyal support of our organization, and congratulate them upon the occasion of their personal centenaries. The Fossils will celebrate our own 111th anniversary on May 28, 2015. The Fossils as an organization were less than eleven years old when Martha and Charles were born in 1915. After LAJ was acquired in 1916, the New York City Fossils would host visitors at Fossil headquarters in the American Tract Society building and then adjourn to Pontin's restaurant for a banquet. Every visit or special occasion seemed to justify a Fossil banquet! Even in the 1950s Edna "Vondy" McDonald and Edward H. Cole would meticulously plan the business agenda and the banquet menus for the annual Fossil meeting in New York City. The banquet menus as published in *THE FOSSIL* makes interesting reading for present-day amateur journalists. The presence of "living legends" like Martha and Charles on our roster helps us recall those days and other important occasions in ajay history. Martha played a key role in UAP and its poetry circles, along with her fellow centenarian Marion Fields Wyllie. Charles was an important figure not only in mainstream amateur journalism but also in the emerging hobby of science fiction fandom during the 1930s. The Rusty Hevelin fanzine collection at University of Iowa probably contains examples of some of Charles's early productions.

While I have retired from active participation in the amateur journalism hobby, Bill Boys has been kind enough to continue to send me the NAPA email news, so I also want to take note of the recent passing of Leah Warner at the age of ninety. Leah and her husband Jake have probably donated close to one hundred years of participation in the amateur journalism hobby over their lifetimes. If all of the three generations of Warner family members who have participated in the hobby are counted, the extended Warner family has probably contributed two hundred years or more of participation to the hobby. Leah's and Jake's granddaughter Alice (Warner) Brosey and her husband Marc have taken enough interest in the history of the hobby to join our own organization. The

Fossils condole the Warner family on their loss, and convey our thanks to them for their continuing contributions to the hobby. ♦

Over \$8,000 Raised for Library of Amateur Journalism in 2014

By David M. Tribby

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN FOUNDATION has announced a total of \$8,325.05 was raised in support of the Library of Amateur Journalism (LAJ) during 2014. Ben Strand, Director of Development for UW-Madison Libraries, is excited about future possibilities: "We are still developing proposals to submit for support for the collection. This may yet include some of the specific funding we ask for annually from larger Foundations."

The Fossils made the first donation. In July, trustees authorized a payment of \$1,000 for the ongoing work of cataloging the vast collection of amateur journals and related memorabilia. Shortly afterwards, three Fossils made individual donations totalling \$1,940.05.

In September, the American Amateur Press Association donated \$3,000 from their treasury: \$1,000 for the ongoing work plus \$2,000 toward the creation of a permanent endowment fund, named in memory of Leland M. Hawes, Jr. (The UW Foundation requires a minimum balance of \$10,000 to create an endowment. Once created, the interest generated by the fund will be used to support the LAJ.) In late October, The Fossils made an additional donation of \$2,000 to support this endowment.

AAPA challenged members to make personal donations, authorizing up to \$500 in matching funds for gifts made through the end of the year. As of early January, AAPA Secretary-Treasurer Ivan Snyder believed the challenge had been met, and another \$500 would be sent shortly.

The Foundation's report shows an almost even split of monies raised through December 31, with \$4,040.05 donated toward ongoing work and \$4,285.00 for the endowment.

Individual Fossils are encouraged to make additional contributions during 2015. The easiest way may be to add to your renewal check (and many members come due in January). Secretary-Treasurer Tom Parson will collect the contributions, then send a single check to the Foundation. However, anyone who wants their donation to be tax-deductible must make it directly to the Foundation; this can be done by check, on-line credit card transaction, or stock donation. In all cases, it is important to designate the gift for "Library of Amateur Journalism" and specify whether it is for current work or the Hawes Endowment.

Full information on how to give is available on-line at www.thefossils.org/supportlaj.html ♦

Cost Savings, Renewals, Correspondence, & Early History

by David M. Tribby

AS NOTED IN the last issue, publication costs for THE FOSSIL are lower when Gary Bossler handles production and mails them from Ohio. Not only does his printer provide a great rate, but the use of lighter weight paper means a 12-page issue can be folded to fit a standard sized envelope, reducing postage. Total cost of printing and mailing issue 361 from Ohio was \$1.63 per copy, compared to \$2.80 for issue 360, which I handled from California. If Gary is available to handle the printing and mailing chores, we can produce four 12-page issues per year and not break the bank! Thanks go to Gary for printing and mailing this issue.

Another cost saver: beginning this month we will reduce the number of free copies mailed to non-members. For a number of years, THE FOSSIL has been sent to most AAPA and NAPA officers, but now instead of sending a physical copy we will e-mail a link to the PDF file found on our website.

It may seem odd that we make our “product”—THE FOSSIL—available for free on the Web. Readers can skip paying dues or a subscription fee and simply access all content on-line. But we look at THE FOSSIL as the way to spread the word about amateur journalism history and prefer to have as high a circulation as possible. According to Web statistics, more issues are downloaded per year than printed. We are happy to provide this service, although we do need additional members to ensure all the offices are filled and enough dues are paid to keep the presses running and the website up. On-line readers are *always* encouraged to consider supporting our efforts by joining.

Speaking of membership, many members come due before the next issue is published. A renewal notice should be mailed with this issue to all members who need to renew. Please check your mailing label for the month your membership expires, and be sure to send your renewal check to Secretary-Treasurer Tom Parson (address in masthead) before that date.

Those who are renewing might consider sending a little extra in their check as a donation to support the Library of Amateur Journalism. As reported elsewhere in this issue, there is much work that needs to be done to preserve the largest collection of amateur journalism publications and memorabilia. Also, a permanent LAJ endowment fund is being established and needs your help. If you do send a donation, please note the amount and for which purpose it should be used.

Although supporting the LAJ via your renewal check may be the most convenient way to donate, if you want to take the gift as a tax deduction you must make it directly to the University of Wisconsin Foundation. Visit The

Fossils' website for complete information on how to do that. We would appreciate hearing from people who make direct donations so we can verify the overall totals. If you have questions, please send them to me.

In the last issue I asked for feedback on the format and content of THE FOSSIL. One member noted his highlights included the “lovely long” first presidential message by Ken Faig. I am pleased the 12-page format allows ample room for his erudite essays.

I have enjoyed corresponding with several on-line readers, particularly Jessica Isaac, the PhD candidate mentioned in Ken's current message, who has used several collections to study nineteenth century amateur journalism. She has shared her insights about how amateurism affected adolescents of the 1870s and 1880s. She has also compared seven different collections (including LAJ) to understand how methods used to acquire materials make each collection unique, and a researcher using only one source might come to faulty conclusions. I recommend visiting her website, www.jessicaisaac.net, and clicking on the “Research” and “Graphing Amateurism” links.

Jessica's work brings into clearer focus the earliest era of organized amateur journalism, of which I had been only partly aware. The low-cost table-top printing press was the high-tech innovation of its day, with hundreds of teenagers using it to hone marketable job skills (printing and writing) and to reach out to others in their age group. Local, regional, and national groups provided a forum for these young people to meet in person. Vigorous political battles to elect leaders was an important component of the hobby in the early days.

Several accounts about the “Golden Era” are available on-line from Google Books:

- “Amateur Newspapers,” *St. Nicholas*, July 1882 (Vol. 9, No. 9, pp 717-27) captures the enthusiasm of early NAPA publishers.
- “A Convention of Amateur Journalists,” *St. Nicholas*, July 1883 (Vol. 10, No. 9, pp 708-9) describes NAPA political campaigns by using a hypothetical (and humorous) example.
- *The Career and Reminiscences of an Amateur Journalist and a History of Amateur Journalism*, Thomas G. Harrison, 1883, 330 pp, is the story of one boy's involvement in Amateurism from 1875 to 1878.
- “Little Things” in *St. Nicholas Magazine* for December 1920 (Vol. 48, No. 2, pp 110-118) tells the amazing story of five young sisters whose paper's circulation grew to 1,000 in the early 1870s and attracted the attention of author Louisa M. Alcott.

All of these, and more, can be accessed from the “History” section of The Fossils' website. ♦

Peter E. Schaub

by David M. Tribby

PETER SCHAUB, current president of the American Amateur Press Association, joined The Fossils in August “because I love the hobby and do want its history to be recorded.”

Peter became an amateur journalist while a senior at Newark Academy prep school in New Jersey. A teacher at the school who knew of his interest in hobby printing put him in touch with Tom Whitbread, who in early 1965 recruited Peter into the National APA. He quickly became active, publishing several issues of *The Novelty Pressman* on his Kelsey press. He attended the NAPA convention that July and was appointed to the recruiting committee. In September he joined the AAPA. He remained active in both groups for several years, serving as NAPA Recorder, attending conventions and local amateur gatherings, and continuing to publish his *Pressman*. Eventually other pursuits (including marriage to his wife, Connie, a two year hitch in the Navy, and starting a career) left little time for the hobby. He dropped out in the early 1970s.

His printing equipment, including a Pearl press, stood dormant for over thirty years until his oldest daughter asked him to print her wedding invitations. When he went on-line to find new rollers and other necessities, he came across AAPA’s website. He rejoined the group in 2008 and began publishing *The Pearl*, winning a Laureate award for letterpress printed journal in 2010 and 2014. Peter attended the AAPA/NAPA Chicago convention in 2010, and he and Connie attended AAPA conventions in 2011 and 2012.

Peter was elected to a two-year term as president of AAPA in 2013. Last year he took the lead in establishing an endowment fund through the University of Wisconsin Foundation to support the Library of Amateur Journalism.

Peter has a degree in mechanical engineering from Stevens Institute in New Jersey. He worked for the electric utility company in Washington, DC, for over 40 years, retiring as Director of Energy Supply. Peter and Connie lived for many years in Alexandria, Virginia, but have been in Williamsburg since 2012. Both of their daughters, Gretchen and Johanna, are now married. ♦

IN ITS EARLIEST YEARS, THE FOSSIL would periodically print a list of members who had died since the organization’s founding in 1903. By 1943, the 265 names on the list filled a complete page. We honor that tradition by printing the names and dates of death of members who have died in the last ten years. If an obituary was printed in THE FOSSIL, the issue number is included in the middle column. All of these issues are available on-line.

Moitoret, Victor A.	324.....	Jan. 19, 2005
Mills, Robert.....	325.....	July 6, 2005
Killie, J. F. (Jerry).....	327.....	Oct. 11, 2005
Diachenko, Joseph A.	327.....	Oct. 25, 2005
Wesson, Helen V.	330.....	Sept. 7, 2006
Brady, Donald E.	332.....	Dec. 18, 2006
Macaulay, Charles C.	334.....	May 17, 2007
Boyer, Leslie W.	334.....	June 22, 2007
Guinane, James F.	334.....	June 23, 2007
Geier, Marguerita E.	337.....	Sept. 2, 2007
Newman, J. Ed.....	337.....	Feb. 10, 2008
Campbell, Miriam B.	337.....	March 3, 2008
Harris, Eula Lee (Merry).....	339.....	Nov. 16, 2008
Fontenot, Eunice M.	341.....	Dec. 13, 2008
Millar, Betty B.	341.....	Feb. 27, 2009
Teed, Merlin E. ....	.....	May 4, 2009
Ruben, Elliott M.	342.....	July 7, 2009
Segal, Harold.....	342.....	July 18, 2009
Conover, Theodore E.	342.....	Sept. 14, 2009
Wetzel, Benton E. ....	.....	Jan. 28, 2010
Weigel, Robert D.	344.....	March 7, 2010
George, David L. ....	.....	May 13, 2010
Vrooman, Ann.....	347.....	Aug. 24, 2010
Botterill, Guy R.	348.....	Sept. 26, 2010
McIntosh, Clement H. ....	.....	March 28, 2011
Norris, Walter.....	360.....	April 26, 2011
Simmons, Betty.....	.....	July 12, 2011
Liddle, Frederick J.	350.....	Aug. 7, 2011
Halbert, Robert L.	358.....	Aug. 26, 2011
Smolin, Harold.....	352.....	Dec. 25, 2011
Oliner, Stanley J. (Stan).....	352.....	Jan. 15, 2012
Lincoln, Louise A.	352.....	March 5, 2012
Miller, Guy G.	354.....	Sept. 15, 2012
Waite, Michael W.	357.....	Jan. 1, 2013
Wyllie, Marion F.	355.....	Jan. 5, 2013
Norris, Patty Sue.....	360.....	March 6, 2013
Hawes, Leland M.	356.....	May 18, 2013

Don't Delay...

If you received a renewal notice with your copy of THE FOSSIL, send your dues or subscription to Secretary-Treasurer Tom Parson before the expiration date found on your mailing label.

And when you renew, consider making a donation to the Library of Amateur Journalism.

Webmaster Report

by David M. Tribby

APRIL 8 MARKS the tenth anniversary of The Fossils' website. Originally created to hold basic information about The Fossils and amateur journalism history content previously hosted on Mike Horvat's American Private Press Association site, it soon expanded to include listings of winners of Fossil awards as well as complete text from recent issues of THE FOSSIL.

A major addition in the past year is the "Collections" area, which documents collections of amateur journals available for public browsing. The list has grown to twelve major collections and 19 smaller ones. This fall, with the help of Jake Warner, who provided the list of libraries that receive either NAPA bundles or *The National Amateur*, the following were added: University of Kansas, University of Toledo, University of Sydney, and Youngstown State University.

Another recent change is a prominent link on the home page for information about making a donation to the Library of Amateur Journalism.

During 2014, the site averaged more than 63 visitors per day (not counting automated "spiders" that comb the Internet to index content). Most individual issues of THE FOSSIL are downloaded over 100 times per year. Issue number 353 (July 2012), the most-accessed file on the site, was viewed by 1,449 visitors in 2014.

The cost for hosting the website is only \$25/year, with an additional fee of \$135 paid in 2008 to register the domain for 9 years.

If you haven't visited www.thefossils.org in a while, drop by and see what's new. ♦

Secretary-Treasurer Report

by Tom Parson

THE BALANCE IN the PNC bank account at the end of 2014 stands at \$3,811.18.

We have received letters of notification from the University of Wisconsin Foundation of donations from The Fossils account for the Library of Amateur Journalism (for \$2000 on 7/22/2014 and \$2000 on 11/5/2014); and also a notification that they have received gifts in memory of Leland Hawes from Peter Schaub of Williamsburg, Virginia, and Kenneth & Carol Faig of Glenview, Illinois (unspecified amounts or dates of these donations).

In 2014 we continued publication of THE FOSSIL, with four substantive and excellent issues. 2014 also saw administrative reorganization enabling our continued activities, with involvement of additional new leadership, and improvement of our systems for membership renewals and record keeping. Thanks and welcome to our new board President Ken Faig, our continuing board members Gary Bossler and John Horn, Librarian Sean Donnelly, and Webmaster & Official Editor Dave Tribby. (Report prepared January 15, 2015.) ♦

Ajay News Items

- THE NATIONAL AMATEUR PRESS ASSOCIATION will hold its 140th convention July 2 through 4 in Columbus, Ohio. Find further information on NAPA's site: www.amateurpress.org/conventn/conv2015.htm
- With the withdrawal of an offer to host the 2016 convention in Raleigh, North Carolina, NAPA is looking for a location and host for convention number 141. One site under consideration: Madison, Wisconsin, home of the Library of Amateur Journalism. Unfortunately, no members live nearby.
- American APA members are considering amending their constitution to allow its mailer to skip up to half of their bundles. The proposal, out for voting through February 16, saves effort if very few papers arrive in a particular month. However, the need for such action has lessened. The January *American Amateur Journalist* notes an average of 13.08 items per month during 2014, up from 9.25 during the first eight months of 2013.
- A random statistic: postage for a single set of 2014 bundles came to \$11.14 for AAPA (12 monthly bundles) and \$14.46 for NAPA (13 bundles, including a special letterpress-only mailing in November). ♦

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

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