

The Fossil

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Working With Russ on the AAJ

by Dave Tribby

BACK IN 1977, at age 24, I was elected official editor of the American Amateur Press Association (AAPA) and had responsibility for producing *American Amateur Journalist* on a bimonthly schedule beginning with the November issue.

In those pre-desktop-publishing days, the editor either had to print the *AAJ* himself or hire a printer to do the job. Luckily for me, prominent amateur journalist and professional printer Russell Louis Paxton of Salem, Virginia, had been the go-to printer for many years.

Russ, born July 4, 1907, had been a hobby printer since 1923. After joining the Lone Scouts of America he published *The American Scout* and other tribe publications for the organization. He joined the National APA in 1933 and was a founding member of AAPA in 1936. In the early years of World War II, he was injured while working as a machinist at the Hercules Powder plant. While recovering, he worked to turn his print shop into a business, and also began working at the local weekly newspaper. Unfortunately, the publisher never seemed to have enough cash on payday for Russ's full wages. After a year Russ requested a final settlement for \$900 owed him. He accepted a beat-up Model 3 Linotype as payment, figuring that would be the best deal he could get.

That Linotype allowed Russ to print papers for other amateurs, particularly those serving in the military. In 1945 Russ was appointed AAPA's official editor and, of course, he also did the printing—turning out beautiful work. Subsequent editors over the next decade hired Russ to print their volumes. After a hiatus beginning in 1956, Russ took over as printer again in 1962 and printed most *AAJ* volumes after that. When I be-

came editor, he had printed 147 of the 239 issues published to that time. Russ also printed many issues of *THE FOSSIL* and *The National Amateur*.

In August I wrote to ask if he was willing to print my volume, and he replied in the affirmative. "Since I've cut down some on my local printing so that I would be able to continue printing one of 'my first loves,' the *AAJ*, I'll be happy to continue printing it for you as editor and feel that you and I can do a respectable job of it." He had recently bought Linotype mats for Baskerville and suggested we use that for the body type. He sent along a book of additional typefaces for heads, but cautioned I stay away from the handset faces. "I'd like you to use as many of the Linotype faces as possible, at the low price I charge for *AAJ* pages. ... Yes, I'll work with you—like I have with other editors—for thirty or forty years, off and on."

I would edit contributed articles and type up my own, then mark up any special fonts and other instructions on the typewritten sheets. These were mailed from California to Virginia so they reached Russ about a month before the publication date. He would then Linotype the straight matter and heads, hand set the larger titles, and print two galley proofs. When I received the proofs I would correct one of them and cut up the other to paste up for the page format I wanted. The markups had to be back to Russ in time for him to make the corrections, build the forms, print the pages, assemble and bind the issue, and get them to the mailer before the bundle deadline.

As we worked through the first issue, Russ had to tutor me on production issues:



Russ Paxton printed 189 issues of American Amateur Journalist between 1944 and 1984.

The journals listed in the "Bundle Report" are underlined (which means italic or boldface). During the years Liddle was editor we decided that this emphasis was not worth the double price charge for this type composition. If you will check the past several years you will find this is so. Of course, if you want this, (as indicated) we will be glad to follow your instructions, at an added cost of \$7.35 per page on this type of text matter.

We also note that you designate 14-pt. Craw Clarendon for the head on this report. This weight of bold type is not recommended by good printers to go with Baskerville, or the lighter weight text faces—except in advertising. The lighter weight 14-pt. Cloister Bold or Bodoni Bold will go in better harmony,—or the 14-pt. Baskerville is large enough for this page, since it will be set in 8-pt. type. These are just suggestions...

That wouldn't be the last time Russ referred to the way Fred Liddle had done things when he edited three consecutive volumes (the then-constitutional limit) beginning in 1973. Fred had worked in print shops for years and implicitly understood the capabilities and limitations of a professional letterpress shop. I wonder if Fred may have been Russ's favorite editor.

Russ soon had directions about the sort of details I needed to watch:

Oct. 5, 1977

Dave,

Not having worked with you before, I just don't know how to set some of this copy; however, [after] this first issue, we will be able to better understand each other.

When I wrote you last, I had not gone into the copy, just glanced at it. However in setting this, there's a couple other things I'd like to get your thoughts on: In setting the 10-pt. for the Laureates, I found that after setting a couple the authorized (or standard correct way), I saw that you had placed the , (comma) outside the closing quotation marks. This is incorrect, according to leading authorities. ...

This suggestion here, might help both of us. In the future, it will only be necessary to mark copy to be set other than the 9-pt., since this will be your main body text. ...

I'll mention other things as they pop up. So, pleasant editing, and a good volume.

Oct. 12, 1977

Dave,

There's a few things I'd like to call to your attention, thus this letter. First, as you can see from galley proof #11, the title will not go in 36-pt. Lydian Cursive, but I can set it in 30, if you like, and don't think that is too small ...

On the same proof, you will note that I did not set, in the program copy, the place of meeting in italic because the parens and figures have small caps on them, and to have done so would have involved wasted time and trouble of picking these characters out of the "pi" drawer and I did not see that it was that important. ...

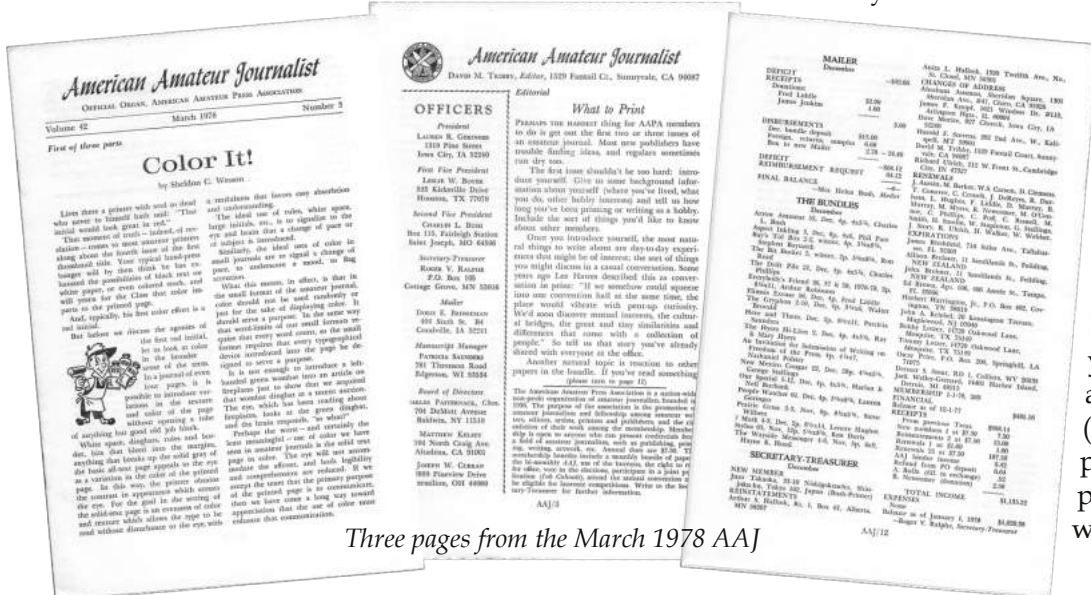
We have not been handsetting 8-or-10-pt. in any face for officer report dates in any face ... much handset type will run the cost up; so I set these lines in 8- & 10-pt. Cloister Bold which will harmonize, and will be bold enough with the Baskerville. I trust, when you see the proofs, that these will be suitable.

Oh yes, you may notice in reading the proofs that I have inserted a short word in a couple of places where I could, without changing the meaning, to avoid too-wide spacing between the words—where the next word was indivisible. ...

You had a real batch of copy, so here's hoping that you will be able to fit it where & how you want it.

Russ finished the changes and production chores, shipped Vol. 42, No. 1 (20 pages) to the mailer on Oct 28 via special handling, and then sent me a letter with additional details about what typefaces were most easily used. He closed with, "I've tried to follow your instructions as closely as possible, in order to make this volume YOUR VOLUME and not that of the printer. ... Your layout and make-up dummy was okay, and involved little or no change, as all copy fit very nicely. Congratulations on your first issue."

Reviewing these letters from forty years ago, I'm surprised at how many typographic style rules I think of as my own came from Russ. "One thing I noticed, you, like some others, use an apostrophe with the years (1970's, etc.), which denotes possessive, when it really is a plural." "The correct spacing with the dash: I like a thin



Three pages from the March 1978 AAJ

space on each side, except where there is not room for spacing." "Linotype is a brand name, the same as Coca-Cola, so you wouldn't set that coca-cola, would you? That is why I have changed your copy to a cap 'L' wherever it represents this trade-mark name. OK?"

One controversy that year stemmed from a snarky comment I made in the January critic's column. "When I first opened [the October bundle] I thought Helen Bush had accidentally put an old newspaper in my bundle, but I doubt she regularly receives the *Gentry*, *Arkansas Journal Advocate*. Why any member would submit the classified page from his weekly paper is beyond me." Actually, I could tell Mannie Schaffer was submitting a poetry column he wrote for his local paper—but I wanted to make the point that it was inappropriate to send the whole page when only a small part was relevant.

Mannie wrote me a long scathing letter, which I reprinted in *Tribby Tribune* 22 for May 1978. He described my comments as, "the complete consumation of devoid rhetoric, on things in general, and your stupidity in particular." He reminded me that "Poetry, Mr. Tribby, will be here long after you are dead and gone." He closed with, "Critic? You sir, - - - are an idiot!" As I noted in the *Tribune*, "It's unusual to receive a letter full of such warmth and charm that you have to admire the author, even though he disagrees with you."

Mannie may not have caught the irony in my reply, and seemed to appreciate the attention I paid to him. About that same time he had also written to Russ, as editor of *THE FOSSIL* (Russ edited it from 1975 to 1983) and publisher of *American Evangelist and Ajayer*, complaining that those publications were not including enough poetry. Russ replied in an April 1978 *FOSSIL* editorial, and also commented in a letter to me:

I've had some good comment on my last editorial in *THE FOSSIL*, commenting on the "remarkable restraint" which I used. I was hitting (as you suspected) particularly at Schaffer. You should see the TWO letters I received from him. That guy must be a nut, and has only a "one track" mind!

We made it through volume 42, producing 110 pages (counting covers) in the six issues. That was a bit larger than the previous couple of years, but in line with volumes 37, 38, and 39. Total cost: \$1,699.29. In my closing editorial for that volume I noted, "One man who deserves a great deal of credit for putting together the *AAJ* this past year is our printer Russ Paxton. Printing my own amateur papers did not prepare me for the proofreading, markup, and layout demands of the *AAJ*. ... Russ had quite a bit to teach me. He did it all with good humor and produced a professional looking volume in spite of my sometimes confusing instructions."

One point of irritation for us was slowness by President Lauren Geringer in approving payment of Russ's invoices. At one point, Russ was waiting to be paid for two issues.

Gehry printed 3,000 copies of his *People Watcher* each month for six amateur journalism groups. He was also active in local Iowa writers' groups and retiree associations. I wondered if he was stretched too thin, as he was often tardy submitting his presidential messages. About midway through the term he slipped in the shower and needed to be hospitalized. Thinking Gehry would be satisfied with one term, I was pleased when Board of Directors Chairman Charlie Pasternack agreed to run as president—and disappointed when Gehry did, indeed, decide to run for a second term and won it 117 to 64.

One reason I wanted to be official editor was access to the bound volumes of all issues that are passed from one editor to the next. The previous editor, Mary Floyd, was unresponsive to my letters asking when she could send them, and they didn't show up until seven months into my term. Reading the old issues was quite interesting, and inspired several story ideas. In order to get those ideas into print I ran (unopposed) for a second term. Fred Liddle wrote to say, "I'm glad to hear you are running for re-election as OE because I think everyone is entitled to a second chance...maybe you'll do better this time around."

An anonymous publication, *The Bodkin*, in the February 1979 bundle was dedicated to the proposition that the critic's column was harmful to the association,



Russ & Laddie at the Linotype



The Paxton family circa 1950: Russ and Eloise with daughters Norma, Barbara, & Shirley, and son Russell, Jr.

and likely the reason members dropped out. The next month's issue again took aim at *AAJ*, suggesting the printing was too expensive and it could be typed and copied or run mimeo. *The Bodkin* didn't like feature articles on members or AAPA history and felt *AAJ* should only include official business.

Russ wrote to me even before I received the March bundle: "God forbid that one of this type would run for editor, and get elected! ... It seems to me he or she is hitting at you as editor, for including the articles he or she mentioned that have appeared in recent issues; but, 'how dry I am' would be a good slogan without some interesting articles outside the regular reports!"

I received other letters of support from members I respected, and none that sided with *The Bodkin*. Mailer Regis Racke reported, "*The Bodkin* is pleased with the response to his articles. The members that approved wrote to him through me. I must have received 30 communications. The letters I left sealed, but the post cards all agreed with the ideas. Most were in regards to the cost and size of the *AAJ*."

The criticism didn't change any plans, and I ended my second year with a 29-page "AAPA Almanac" issue in July and a 22-page "Year Book" for September. Including covers, the page count for volume 43 was 128—a new record.

I did not want a third term, and in the March 1979 issue wrote an article, "Wanted: Official Editor," to encourage someone to file. As part of my research I asked several past editors to comment on what made an editor successful. Here is how Russ responded:

Qualities prospective official editors should have:

1. Time for an unusual amount of correspondence.
2. An adequate knowledge of past history of AAPA.
3. Be an efficient speller and be able to check on authenticity of facts presented in articles for publication, especially spelling of names.
4. Be able to write or compile copy for interesting filler copy to plug holes in pages needing fillers.
5. Have a list of members willing to write special articles when needed.
6. Very important to meet scheduled deadlines with copy to the printer, because he cannot work miracles.
7. Compute copy accurately and edit it as wanted before sending to the printer to fill the space allotted to same, to avoid editing and cost of resetting after proofs are sent to the editor.
8. Watch for widow lines in dummy!

In addition to printing twelve issues, Russ wrote three feature articles for the *AAJ*: "The Fossils, Inc.," "Estimating Text Composition," and "How I Became an Amateur Publisher."

The bi-monthly *AAJ* schedule meant that when the final proofs were sent to Russ for one issue it was almost time to start writing for the next one. I estimated that each issue took at least thirty hours of thinking up ideas, sending letters, editing, writing, proofreading, and layout.

It was a bit of a grind, but in my final message I could say, "Official Editor may be the best job on the official board." It certainly would not have been as much fun without Russ. ♦

Dave Tribby Receives 2018 Russell L. Paxton Memorial Award

by Ken Faig, Jr.

ON BEHALF OF The Fossils Board of Directors, I am pleased to announce that our Fossils editor, David M. Tribby, is the winner of the Russell L. Paxton Memorial Award for 2018. This prestigious award, sponsored by Fossils director John Horn, was last awarded to our librarian, Mike Horvat, in 2016. A list of prior recipients can be found on our website under the "Awards" tab.

Russ Paxton (who died at age eighty-one in 1988) devoted his energies to editing THE FOSSIL in 1975-83, so it is certainly appropriate that Dave Tribby, our editor since 2013, is this year's Paxton award recipient. You can read more about Paxton in THE FOSSIL for January 2012 (issue 351) on our website.

David joined The Fossils in 1977, during Russ's term in the editorial chair, and notably contributed "The 250th Issue of *AAJ*" (a continuation of Lee Hawes'

AAPA history in the July 1961 number) to THE FOSSIL for January 1980.

David began printing with Swiftset rubber type for his elementary school class as early as 1960. He graduated to a Kelsey press in 1964, joined AAPA at age sixteen in 1970, and began publishing *The Handset Journal* and *The Tribby Tribune*. David gradually acquired more sophisticated printing equipment over the years, and then acquired the print shop of Charlie Hinde in 2004. *The Tribby Tribune* attained its landmark one hundredth number in 2009.

While he has maintained memberships in AAPA, NAPA, and The Fossils, David has devoted his primary energies to AAPA over the course of his amateur career. David has also been very active in the Printers' Guild, a letterpress group affiliated with History Park

in San Jose, California. He followed in the footsteps of Bill Haywood's *It's a Small World* in publishing *Ink Cahoots*, a cooperative publication consisting of contributions printed by various AAPA members. David was largely responsible for building AAPA's notable website, and performed a similar function for The Fossils when Mike Horvat had to discontinue his American Private Press Association website.

David has served The Fossils in a dual role as editor and as webmaster. It is probably safe to say The Fossils would no longer be in existence were it not for David's efforts in these capacities. David also played a key role in planning the Amateur Journalism Conference held at the University of Wisconsin in Madison in 2016. He has been a tireless promoter of the Leland Hawes Memorial Fund which supports the Library of Amateur Journalism Collection in Madison.

David is a graduate of Stanford University. He and his wife Liz reside in Sunnyvale, California. Among his prior honors, David boasts the Gold Composing Stick Award conferred by The Fossils in 2007 in honor of his long years of achievement in our hobby. The year 2020 will mark David's fiftieth anniversary in our hobby and AAPA.

Past Paxton Recipients

THE FOLLOWING amateur journalists have received the Russell L. Paxton Award for Service to Amateur Journalism:

1986: Russell L. Paxton
1988: Lauren Geringer
1989: Willametta Keffer
1990: Leslie W. Boyer
1991: Harold Segal
1992: Victor Moitoret
1993: Ralph W. Babcock
1994: Eula "Merry" Harris
1995: Hyman Bradofsky
1996: Lenore Hughes
1999: Guy Miller
2000: Louise Lincoln
2001: Michael J. O'Connor
2002: Stanley Oliner
2003: Leland M. Hawes, Jr.
2004: Joseph A. Diachenko
2005: Frederick J. Liddle
2006: Gary Bossler
2007: Dean Rea
2008: William E. Boys
2009: Jacob L. Warner
2010: Ivan D. Snyder
2011: Ken Davis
2012: Ken Faig, Jr.
2016: Martin "Mike" Horvat

Please join me and the other members of The Fossils Board of Directors in congratulating David Tribby on winning the Russell L. Paxton Memorial Award for 2018. I hope that David will continue as editor of THE FOSSIL for years to come. I think that Russ Paxton, who also served The Fossils as editor, would be very proud of David's achievements with THE FOSSIL. Our numbers may have diminished since Russ's term as editor, but interest in the history of our hobby continues to shine brightly, as evidenced in the pages of THE FOSSIL. Russ and David have helped to keep the history of our hobby a living concern, both for members of the hobby and "outside" observers like librarians and scholars. ♦

From THE FOSSIL for January 1987

Paxton Award Announced

BEGINNING in January of this year The Fossils, Inc. will present an Annual Award to an amateur journalist for "significant contribution(s)" to Amateur Journalism. The award will be called "**The Russell L. Paxton Memorial Award For Service to Amateur Journalism.**" The first recipient of the Award will be its namesake, Russell L. Paxton. Mr. Paxton was chosen for his life-long devotion to the hobby. His "significant contributions" are too many to catalog here, but among them are: his own amateur papers in which he published not only his award winning works but those of scores of other amateurs; his many years of printing the Official Organs for The National Amateur Press Association, The American Amateur Press Association, and our Official Organ; his devotion in serving in many offices for the various amateur press associations; and his generous and selfless counseling of many Official Editors of the various Associations.

The Fossils, Inc. are sponsoring the Award which is being supplied for an unspecified number of years by a generous and devoted member who wishes to remain anonymous. The annual Award will be a beautiful plaque suitably engraved. The first plaque will read: "In Sincere Appreciation to Russell L. Paxton For His Outstanding Service To Amateur Journalism. From The Fossils, Inc. and His Friends. (date)"

The second and ensuing plaques will be engraved as follows: "The Russell L. Paxton Memorial Award For Service to Amateur Journalism (name of recipient and year given)."

It is the opinion of The Trustees that this Award is in the true spirit and aims of The Fossils, Inc. as Historians of Amateur Journalism. The Fossils, Inc. have many loyal and devoted members and the donor of this Award deserves our sincerest gratitude and highest praise. ♦

An Unexpected Honor

by Dave Tribby

IT IS AN unexpected honor to receive the Russell L. Paxton award. A special thanks to Fossil Trustee John Horn who originally conceived this award, financed it, and each time it is presented personally oversees the creation and mailing of it.

I first learned of the National and American Amateur Press Associations thanks to their outreach to Kelsey printers in 1969 and 1970. (It took the second mailing, by AAPA, to get me to join—perhaps because AAPA provided a separate card to return for a sample bundle. NAPA required me to cut up their brochure.) When I saw the offbeat little papers that members produced, I knew this was the hobby for me. I had published my own elementary school paper six years earlier, and was looking for a reason to publish again.

A lot of Kelsey printers joined AAPA in 1970, and the bundles contained an entertaining mix of long-time publishers and neophytes learning what their presses could do.

Making personal connections added another dimension to the hobby. After the first *Handset Journal*, I received many cards and letters of welcome. As an added bonus, I lived in the Tampa Bay Area with its Suncoast Amateur Press Society led by Lee Hawes and Jack Bond. Tampa hosted the 1971 AAPA convention, and I got to meet amateurs from across the country, including Verle Heljeson, Fred Liddle, Mike O'Connor, Roy Lindberg, and the Wesson family. Their energy and enthusiasm inspired me to increase my own activity.

My "service" to amateur journalism has been, for the most part, simply doing things I enjoy.

While on the topic of the Paxton award, it's worth noting that Ken Faig, Jr. received it in 2012, just after



Above: Dave Tribby holds 2018 Paxton award. Right: Close-up of award.



he had completed eight years of editing THE FOSSIL. His volumes 101 to 108 are among the best, offering detailed coverage of historic topics and current a-jay affairs. He also served on the Library of Amateur Journalism Committee in 2004 when the LAJ had to be moved from Stayton, Oregon; the committee's work secured its new home at the University of Wisconsin.

There was little mention of Ken's award at the time, probably because then-President Guy Miller died before he could write about it in his next president's message. The awards section of our website was updated to add Ken, including a brief biography from the October 2014 issue of THE FOSSIL when he became president.

Since 2010, the printing and mailing for nearly all issues of THE FOSSIL have been handled by Trustee Gary Bossler and his local printer, Bob Kring. Bob has given us good service at a favorable price. Unfortunately, for us, that is coming to an end. In early March Gary wrote, "My friend at M & K Printing in Massillon is selling his business and equipment. I may have mentioned before that he wants to retire and he finally has a buyer. He is hoping the deal is complete by May 1st." We will miss Bob's service, but don't begrudge him his retirement. Congratulations, and thanks!

We also thank Gary for his faithful service of picking up the printed issues, folding them to fit the envelopes, preparing address labels, putting the labels and stamps on the envelopes, adding renewal notices for members and subscribers who are coming due, and delivering them to the post office.

If anyone else a) has a local printer who would give us a great rate and b) is willing to do the mailing, please get in touch with me. In the meantime, I'll need to look for a reasonably-priced printer—not an easy task here in the high-priced Silicon Valley! ♦

Secretary-Treasurer Report

by Tom Parson

BANK BALANCE AS OF JANUARY 31, 2018: \$3,829.50

Deposits

Dues and subscription \$320.00

Donation \$35.00

Expenses

January FOSSIL \$47.89

Monthly bank fee \$2.00

AVAILABLE AS OF FEBRUARY 28, 2018: \$4,134.61 ♦

With the Fossils

by Dave Tribby

FOSSIL **BARRY SCHRADER** welcomed his wife, **Kay**, back to their home on February 21. She suffered a significant stroke on April 14 of last year and since then had been receiving care in hospitals and the health center of Oak Crest, the retirement center where they live. So far, there are no plans to move to assisted living: "Kay is doing well at home, with the assistance of a health aide who comes in two hours each weekday morning. Looking back a year, it is a miracle Kay is doing so well."

Barry's efforts to assist with the establishment of a letterpress program in the Art department at nearby Northern Illinois University (see October issue) have been stymied. "Had a call from the art professor saying the university is making him jump through hoops with the 'hazardous' ink and cleaners so is delayed in setting up the print shop." In the meantime, he has helped organize a Rotary Club at Oak Crest.

Fossil subscriber **Ivan Snyder** plans on attending two Printers' Fairs in one week. First up, on Sunday, April 15, is the Letterpress Printers Fair held in the city where he lives, Portland, Oregon. The following Saturday, April 21, he will volunteer at the Bay Area Printers' Fair and Wayzgoose in San Jose, California, some 675 miles south. Other amateur journalists expected at the latter Fair include San Jose Printers' Guild members **Kim Hamilton**, **Matt Kelsey**, and **Dave Tribby**.

Ivan is getting serious about selling off his letterpress shop, in preparation for a move. "I have not decided for sure if I will have any type at my new address. I had thought I would not, but **Ron Hylton** indicated he would be able to print my journals if I set the type and give him the pages tied up and ready to put on his Heidelberg." Recent issues of his *Amateur Observer* in the AAPA bundles have been produced using the free desktop publishing software Scribus, the same package used for THE FOSSIL.

In the December AAPA bundle, Fossil **Jack Scott** announced he was producing "my last letterpress entry. This Pilot and a 3 x 5 Kelsey are going to **Alex Diehl** and his sister **Elizabeth**," who live nearby. In July 2014, **Danny Kelly** of Cleveland acquired the bulk of Jack's extensive letterpress shop.

Over a year ago, in December 2016, Jack needed to have three screws inserted in his leg after he tripped and fell. He recently wrote and described the rehab: "The hip is like new. I chose outpatient therapy. I never

would have been in this kind of shape doing the exercises by myself. The little twinges that happen would have worried me, and I would have backed off. I don't use a cane or walker. I do go to a gym several days a week.

Jack will celebrate his 89th birthday on April 13, but remains active. "I volunteer a couple days a week at the Habitat for Humanity warehouse. I spend most of my time in the paint department, where we accept old paint. Any that is 'bad' I stir in sawdust until it is not oozy, and then it can go in the landfill. Just applied to volunteer once a month at the Air Force museum in Dayton. I visit there frequently. There is one airplane, an EB66, that I actually flew for about 4 hours in 1967."

Fossil **Dave Goudsward** reports that, thanks to a grant through the Aeroflex Foundation, he is coordinating the installation of a headstone for amateur journalism legend Charles W. "Tryout" Smith. Smith is buried in Hilldale Cemetery at Haverhill, Massachusetts in a family plot with his parents, his younger daughter and his sister's family. Due to family finances, a stone has never been erected and the plot is marked only by his father's civil war marker. Tentative plans call for an unveiling at the cemetery this summer.

Over the past couple of years, Fossil **Jack Visser** has self-published two books: *Wheel of Faith: Religion Rolls Westward on the Ohio Frontier* and *Steeple/Jack: Poems and Perspectives on Church and Ministry*. Jack notes the books are, "for limited readership due to the specific and regional interest. The project kept me busy enough to stay out of trouble!"

Fossil Secretary-Treasurer **Tom Parson** continues to stay busy with Letterpress Depot activities. Last year donations to the Depot of nearly \$60,000 made possible a wall, concrete ramp, and coated floor—all needed to make the lower level ready for the tons of presses and type cabinets currently stored in a 50-foot semi truck. Once they figure out where everything will go, they need to lay out and install electricity, heating, and plumbing.

In March, as part of the "Mo'Print" month of printing, Tom hosted an open studio day at his personal print shop. In June he will host the annual Wayzgoose of the Amalgamated Printers' Association.

Readers: what is happening in your life that you would like to share? Send a message to the editor. ♦

From *The Lowell Offering* to *Manettism*: Is There a History of Amateur Journalism in the Mills?

by Ken Faig, Jr.



THE HISTORIES OF the amateur journalism hobby make scant reference to the magazines consisting primarily of contributions from female mill operatives which arose in the 1840s. Probably the best known (both published in Lowell, Massachusetts) were *The Operatives' Magazine* (1840-42), which originated in a self-improvement circle directed by the pastor of the First Congregational Church, and *The Lowell Offering* (1842-45), which originated in a similar circle directed by Rev. Abel Charles Thomas (1807-1880), pastor of the Second Universalist Church. There were other such magazines, but most of them were ephemeral, including a revival of *The Lowell Offering* entitled *The New England Offering* (1848-50).

For example, Spencer's *The History of Amateur Journalism* (1957) makes only brief mention of these magazines on pp. 8-9, mostly in connection with his discussion of the poet Lucy Larcom, who went to work in the Lowell mills at age thirteen. Lucy spent most of the years 1835-46 working in the Lowell mills, and contributed some of her early poems to the *Offering*. Charles Dickens famously visited Lowell, and expressed the view that no one ought to have been surprised by the level of literacy of the mill girl authoresses. Writing in her autobiography *A New England Girlhood* (1889), Lucy Larcom expressed the same opinion: "That they [the mills girls] should write was no more strange than that they should study, or read, or think."

As early as 1844, an anthology of selected writings from the *Offering* appeared in England under the title *Mind Amongst the Spindles*. This anthology is still in print, although a more modern anthology, *The Lowell Offering: Writings by New England Mill Women (1840-1845)*, edited by Benita Eisler, was published by J. B. Lippincott in 1977.

The origin of the New England textile mills was of course the textile industry in England, which American pioneers like Samuel Slater and Francis Cabot Lowell (for whom the city of Lowell was named) sought to copy. Plentiful local supply of water power was the origin of mill development in Lowell beginning in the 1820s. The best general history of the early textile industry in Lowell is probably Hannah Josephson's *The Golden Threads* (1949; reprinted, 1967); Thomas Dublin's *Women At Work: The*

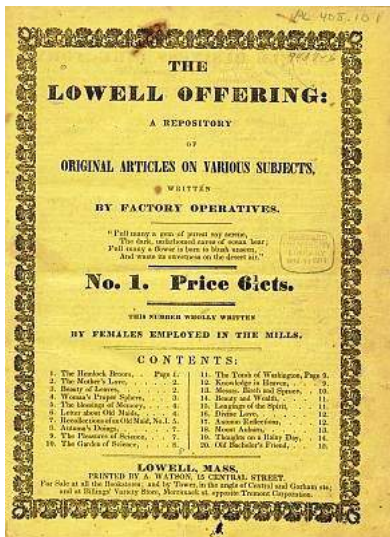
Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860 (1979) is a scholarly treatment of the economic, social and demographic forces which led to the development of the massive textile mill complexes in Lowell.

Traditional female occupations in New England were poor-paying: for example, a typical school mistress might expect to earn \$1 a week for a three-month term of work. A female domestic might earn barely anything in excess of her own room and board. By way of contrast, the young women who flocked to the New England mills beginning in the 1820s might expect to earn \$2, \$3, and even \$4 per week in return for their fourteen-hour days, six days a week. Little wonder that single women seeking to accumulate a wedding dowry or to save their family farms from financial ruin flocked to the mill towns. Mills required unmarried female employees to board in company boarding houses (for which privilege they paid \$1.25 of their weekly wages); initially, weekly attendance at church services was also required. These restrictions may have been necessary to convince New England parents to allow their daughters to go to the mill cities to work. The morals of early English factory operatives had been severely criticized, and many clergymen feared the same debasement might result in the United States.

In her story "Susan Miller" in the *Operative* (1841), contributor F.G.A. had a neighbor deacon express his concerns to a young girl proposing to go to work in the mills to relieve her family's debt (Eisler, p. 175):

Whatever is not right, is certainly wrong; and I do not think it right for a young girl like you, to put herself in the way of all sorts of temptation. You have no idea of the wickedness and corruption which exist, in that town of Lowell. Why, they say that more than half of the girls have been in the House of Correction, or the County Jail, or some other vile place; and that the other half are not much better; and I should not think that you would wish to go and work, and eat, and sleep, with such a low, mean, ignorant, wicked, set of creatures.

The writers in the *Operative* and the *Offering* did not deny the existence of a small minority of moral reprobates among the thousands of young women working in Lowell during the heyday of the textile mills; but they insisted upon the moral correctness of the vast majority including their own contributors.



money” in return for her contributions. The extent to which the mill owners subsidized the *Operative* and the *Offering* also remains unclear. At one point, mill agents reportedly purchased \$1,000 worth of back numbers to keep the *Offering* afloat. Mill capitalist Amos Lawrence was also generous to co-editor Farley and her family. According to labor activist Amelia Sargent, only fifty-two

Issues of *The Lowell Offering*: No. 1 from 1842 (left) and May 1845 (center). A similar title was later used by the University of Massachusetts at Lowell (right).

Far from returning to their rural homes broken in health, the record suggests that most of the female operatives—few of whom stayed as long as Miss Larcom—had successful after-lives, having accumulated enough capital to marry or to relieve their families’ financial needs. There were abortive labor actions (called “stand outs” rather than “strikes”) in the Lowell mills as early as 1834 and 1836, but the incessant drive to increase production while keeping wages down—together with the improvement of wages in other female occupations including teaching—gradually led to the disenchantment of the once eager New England wage-earners. By 1850, over half of the female mill workforce was foreign-born—mostly Irish immigrants resulting from the potato famine beginning in 1845. Polish, Portuguese and other immigrants would swell the proportion of immigrant workers as the second half of the nineteenth century progressed.

Labor militancy had already begun to build in the 1840s. Harriet Farley (misidentified in Spencer’s *History* as Harriet Earley), co-editor of the *Offering*, was harshly criticized for the words in her first signed editorial of November 1842: “With wages, board, etc., we have nothing to do—these depend on circumstances over which we have no control.” The *Offering* stressed the exogenous factors determining wages, and the freedom of operatives to leave employment at their own will (on good terms with the stipulated two weeks’ notice). By way of contrast with the editors of the *Offering*, Sarah G. Bagley took a more militant position, lobbying for the ten-hour day and other reforms.

Neither the *Operative* nor the *Offering* was ever an amateur endeavor by any account. Harriet Farley and Harriot Curtis, who took over the editorship of the *Offering* in 1842, were paid for their editorial work and no longer worked in the mills. Whether and how much their contributors may have been paid remains unclear; Lucy Larcom wrote of receiving a “testimonial in

mill girls subscribed to the *Offering* in the final days before its cessation in December 1845, only a dozen of them from Lowell, while two mill agents subscribed for twenty and twenty-five copies (Josephson, p. 203).

The American Antiquarian Society does not hold either the *Operative* or the *Offering* in its fabled collection of nineteenth-century amateur journals. Whether their holdings of amateur magazines that were published in mill centers would reveal any amateur journals with formal or informal connections to the mills remains for another investigator to determine. The changed environment of Lowell in the second half of the nineteenth century is commented upon both by Josephson and Dublin. The willingness of poverty-stricken immigrants to work for meager wages made progress difficult, despite increased labor militancy. The vaunted ten-hour day was not achieved for women in Massachusetts until 1874. The company boarding house system became extinct as more immigrant families—men, women and children—went to work in the mills and were crowded into grim slums in cities like Lowell. Then, in the twentieth century, the textile industry began to shift operations to the South, because of the availability of cheaper labor and laxer labor laws. The Great Depression beginning in 1929 sounded the death knell of the New England textile industry.

Harriet H. Robinson’s *Loom & Spindle: Life Among the Early Mill Girls* (1898; reprinted, 1976) is a perceptive account of the author’s own experience working in the mills and the “Bible” for the subsequent history of the New England mill girls of the 1840s. Harriet Jane Farley (1812-1907) had several published books in the 1850s and worked for Godey’s *Lady’s Book*. Harriot F. Curtis (1813-1889) edited a Lowell populist newspaper, *Vox Populi*, in 1854-55, and otherwise spent much of her time caring for invalid relatives. Sarah G. Bagley (1806-1889) worked as a telegraph operator, and then married and went into practice with a homeopathic doctor.

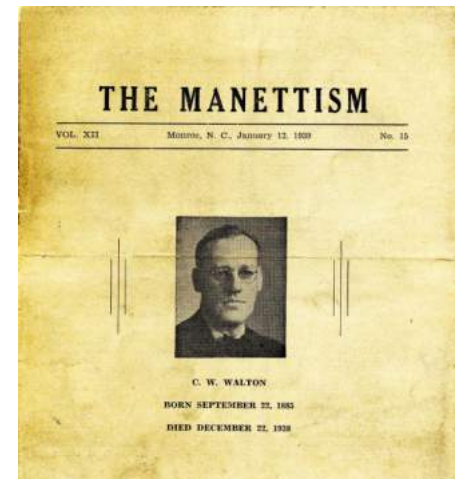
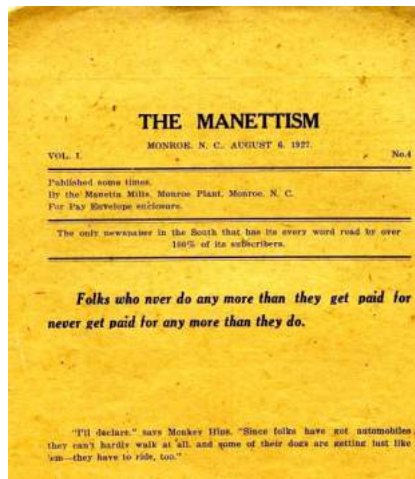
Harriet Hanson Robinson (1825-1911) herself was active in the women's suffrage movement later in her life. Of the mill girls, Lucy Larcom (1824-1893) probably had the most successful literary career. She taught at Wheaton Seminary in Norton MA in 1854-62 and then edited the *Our Young Folks* in 1865-74. She was the friend of John Greenleaf Whittier, and had her *Poetical Works* published in 1884. Harriet Robinson, Harriet Farley and Sarah Bagley all married after their mill careers, while Harriet Curtis and Lucy Larcom remained single.

Altogether, about seventy mill girls are believed to have contributed to the *Operative* and the *Offering*. A biographical dictionary of contributors would be a tremendous asset; perhaps some scholar will undertake this project in the future. I am not aware that any of the contributors ever had any involvement in the organized amateur journalism hobby which emerged in the 1860s and 1870s. For one thing, the surviving mill girls of the 1840s would have been in the midst of their lives in the 1860s and 1870s, and the organized amateur journalism hobby as it developed during those decades was dominated by adolescents and young adults.

There is one twentieth-century successor to the mill papers of the 1840s that did have a firm connection with amateur journalism. *The Manettism* was edited by C. W. Walton (1885-1938), treasurer of the Manetta Mills in Monroe, North Carolina, from 1927 until his death in 1938. He entered the employ of the Manetta Mills in 1903, and worked himself up through the ranks. He married Emma Wilson in 1916 and they had six children. The mill produced cotton blankets and sheeting, and treasurer Walton printed the magazine on his home press. He had a firm connection with the amateur journalism hobby, and solicited contributions to the magazine from many of its members. *The Manettism* shared at least one characteristic with other amateur magazines of the day: the subscription price was advertised as: "Just Let Us Know You Want It." A final memorial issue of *The Manettism* was produced as a tribute to Walton under the date January 1939. Today, a complete collection of *The Manettism* is held in the Carolina Room of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg (N. C.) Library; the Special Collections at UW-Madison (LAJ Collection) and University of Iowa (William Groveman Memorial Collection) also have strong holdings.

Other amateur journalists have had connections with company-sponsored magazines. For example, Elsa Gidlow (1898-1986) for a time edited *Factory Facts* for her then employer. But it was a pure "company paper," concentrating solely on the business and its employees.

That the *Operative* and the *Offering* were commercial enterprises seems without doubt; the extent to which



A sample issue (left) and the final issue (right) of *The Manettism*.

they were subsidized by the mill owners is controverted. *The Manettism* seems to display more of the characteristics of a pure amateur paper although the extent to which Manetta Mills may have helped its employee C. W. Walton with the expenses of publication is unknown.

So is there a genealogy of mill papers or at least of quasi-amateur papers with employer connections? I will have to leave it to another researcher to develop a more definitive answer.

There are abundant publications concerning the mill girls of Lowell. Jeff Levinson's *Mill Girls of Lowell* (2007), Bernice Selden's *The Mill Girls* (1983) and Alice Flanagan's *The Lowell Mill Girls* (2005) are three titles with the phrase in their names. Overall, I have found Josephson and Eisler the best works. The good news is that most of these titles may be purchased very cheaply through secondhand book outlets on the internet. There were Garland Publishing reprints of the full runs of the *Operative* and the *Offering* in 1970 which are more difficult to find; they may be available to some readers through inter-library loan. For most readers, the two anthologies of writings from the *Offering* (Eisler and *Mind Amongst the Spindles*) will have to do.

Whether the mill papers of the 1840s have enough affinities with amateur journalism to be included in historical accounts of the hobby will likely remain a judgmental question. Whether there is any "line of descent" from the *Operative* (1840-42) and the *Offering* (1840-45) to *The Manettism* (1927-39) is a question which deserves future research. My theory is that editor C. W. Walton's connection with the amateur journalism hobby was the mechanism that linked *The Manettism* with our hobby. I wonder if anyone can find any more company-connected papers with such connections.

In addition to the wide range of publications available concerning the Lowell mill girls of the 1840s, there is another noteworthy extant tribute: the literary magazine of the University of Massachusetts at Lowell bears the title *The Lowell Offering*. ♦

Ten Years of Fossil Finances

by Dave Tribby

TEN YEARS AGO, The Fossils' finances were seldom mentioned. President Guy Miller's reports did highlight significant projects, such as the 2005 book *One Hundred Years of The Fossils*, and the need to support them with donations, but seldom included actual dollar amounts. He listed a treasury balance of \$5,654.55 in April 2007, and several specific expenses in later reports: July 2007, \$250 to support the book *NAPA: 1977-2007*; January 2008, \$250 each to the American Antiquarian Society (AAS) and the University of Wisconsin-Madison for the Library of Amateur Journalism (LAJ); October 2009: \$250 to AAS and \$500 for LAJ; October 2010, \$290 for the Fossil lunch at the AAPA-NAPA Concurrent Conventions. In January 2011 the treasury stood at \$5,493.74 but "several undertakings have been possible because of donations, THE FOSSIL and the Gold Composing Stick Award being prime examples."

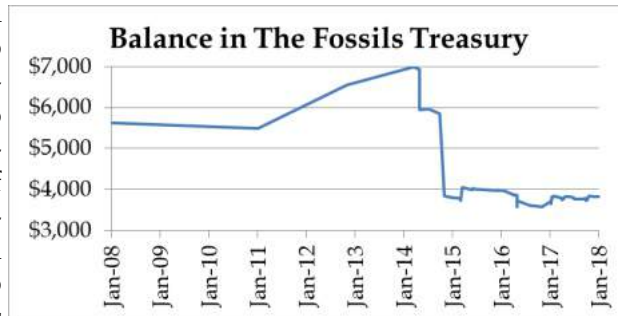
Between 2004 and 2012 Editor Ken Faig turned out large issues of THE FOSSIL (usually 20 or more pages). In October 2011 Guy noted, "we have but forty dues-paying" members and the "production cost of our official organ averages close to \$20 per member" – not sustainable with \$15 annual dues.

When Guy died unexpectedly in September 2012, Fossil trustees examined finances. They found a healthy bank balance of \$6,559.74, but only because Guy had been footing the bill for printing THE FOSSIL. He had printed and mailed the issues himself up to 2010, and after that reimbursed costs from his personal checking account (\$1,429.79 over two years).

Martha Shivvers served as Fossils membership chair beginning in 1997, sending renewal reminders and maintaining the membership list. After she left the position in 2011, no reminders were sent; the only renewals came from those who remembered on their own. Apparently, for about two years The Fossils had almost no income and paid few expenses.

In 2013 Trustee Gary Bossler created a membership spreadsheet based on the last FOSSIL mailing list provided by Guy Miller. Secretary-Treasurer Tom Parson added information regarding dues he had received, but records were incomplete. Most members were given an expiration date of January 31, 2014, and renewal notices were included with the mailing of the January issue of THE FOSSIL. Renewals were strong, and the treasury climbed to \$6,978.80.

Several cost-cutting measures were instituted for THE FOSSIL in 2014, such as folding issues in half to reduce mailing costs and replacing free copies sent to AAPA and NAPA officers with e-mailed links to the online version. But the question remained: was the organization living within its income?



Other than giving \$3,000 in 2014 to support the LAJ, the Fossil treasury has been fairly stable.

There were unusual expenses in 2015, when The Fossils donated \$1,000 for ongoing work at the LAJ and an additional \$2,000 to help establish the Hawes Endowment for long-term support of the LAJ. The next year The Fossils paid several hundred dollars to support Amateur Journalism Conference 2016.

The Fossils finally had a "normal" year in 2017, including four 12-page issues of THE FOSSIL.

Fossil income comes from membership dues (\$15/year for individuals, \$20 for couples), subscriptions (\$10/year), and donations. We currently have 24 individual members on our rolls and one couple. One member, Mike Horvat, was voted a life membership by the trustees in 2015. There are 5 subscribers. If you do the math, expected revenue from these sources would be \$400, but the actual total in 2017 was \$355. Some people pay several years in advance, and one subscriber was tardy and didn't send payment until January 2018. Donations brought in an additional \$20, bringing 2017 income to \$375.

During the year, two memberships expired (Ken Davis and the husband and wife Sean Wilmot & Beth Potter), one subscription was not renewed (Dwayne H. Olson), and two members died (Martha Shivvers and Gordon Rouze). We gained one new member (Pam Wesson).

Here are the expenses recorded during 2017:

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Printing and mailing of THE FOSSIL | \$187.73 (75.2%) |
| Domain and hosting for website | \$35.16 (13.6%) |
| Bank (\$2/mo + returned check) | \$36.00 (13.9%) |

The grand total for expenses: \$258.89.

We are living within our income! During 2017 the treasury grew by \$116.11, with a balance of \$3,831.50 on December 31.

Expenses in 2018 will no doubt be higher: postage costs recently increased and the printer who has given us such favorable rates is retiring. But it's good to know we have enough in the treasury for special activities or an occasional larger issue of THE FOSSIL. ♦

Webmaster Report for 2017

by Dave Tribby

STATISTICS GATHERED during 2017 at The Fossils' website (www.thefossils.org) show an average of 71 visitors per day. Over the entire 365 day period, there were a grand total of 45,242 page views.

Online issues of THE FOSSIL continue to be popular, with the following number of views for new issues:

| | |
|--------------|-----|
| January 2017 | 241 |
| April 2017 | 168 |
| July 2017 | 147 |
| October 2017 | 156 |

The most-viewed issues are April 2011 (464 views), July 2005 (303), July 2006 (296), and July 2009 (215).

Renewal fees were paid in March for both our domain registration (\$13.16) and internet service provider (\$24.95). Our low-cost ISP package provides a maximum 100 MB of disk space, with 65.2 MB currently in

use. The largest portion of that storage is for 53 issues of THE FOSSIL published since October 2004 that take up 39 MB. The amount of space required for an issue grows with the number of pictures included. The four issues added in 2017 require about 3 MB.

I recently made some minor modifications to the website appearance. On wide screens, the text will no longer expand beyond 1000 pixels; if the window is wider, the amount of blank space on the edges expands. In order to be more friendly to mobile devices, the Fossil logo will not be displayed when screen width is 650 pixels or smaller (allowing more room across the top for the menu).

I always enjoy hearing from website visitors, particularly those who have suggestions for improvements. ♦

Selection of 2018-2020 Board

by Dave Tribby

BECAUSE THE FOSSILS' by-laws call for elections in July of even numbered years, nominations, if any, are now in order for two slots on the Board of Trustees. Members of The Fossils elect the Board; they in turn appoint the other officers: secretary-treasurer, official editor, librarian, and webmaster. The three trustees select one of their own as president. Because the president carries over to the next term, only two trustees are elected.

Any proposed amendments to the by-laws would also be voted on in the election. Amendments, proposed by at least five members, must be submitted to President Faig no later than June 10.

Any member who wants to run for office should file with Secretary-Treasurer Tom Parson by June 30.

Ballots must be mailed to members by July 10 and then returned no later than July 31. The new term of office begins on August 15.

In late January Ken Faig reported he was willing to continue as Fossil president. The other trustees, John Horn and Gary Bossler, agreed to keep him in office; they also agreed to file as candidates for re-election.

In 2012, 2014, and 2016, only two candidates filed for the two elected positions, and there were no amendments. The president then proposed the election be canceled, with the two candidates appointed as trustees, in order to save postage and effort. Should there be no additional candidates, and no amendments, the same procedure is likely this year. ♦

The Fossil

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION of The Fossils, a non-profit organization for anyone 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, contact the secretary-treasurer or visit our website:

www.thefossils.org

Gathering of articles, editing, and layout were completed by the official editor in California; production and mailing were handled by Gary Bossler in Ohio.

Fossil Board: 2016 - 2018

Ken Faig, Jr., PRESIDENT, 2020 Chestnut Ave. Apt. 405, Glenview, IL 60025; president@thefossils.org

Gary Bossler, 145 Genoa Avenue S.W., Massillon, OH 44646; gbossler@thefossils.org

John Horn, 24300 Chenal Parkway, #71, Little Rock, AR 72223; jhorn@thefossils.org

Appointed Officers

Official Editor: Dave Tribby, 1529 Fantail Court, Sunnyvale, CA 94087; editor@thefossils.org

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

Librarian: Mike Horvat, 22275 SW 102nd Place, Tualatin, OR 97062; librarian@thefossils.org

Webmaster: Dave Tribby (contact information above)