



# The Fossil

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## John Russell: Forgotten Floridian Amateur

by David Goudsward

BY 1911, H. P. Lovecraft had begun writing letters to magazines, mostly expressing appreciation of a particular author or story. When Lovecraft wrote a letter to the editor of *Argosy* magazine criticizing romance writer Fred Jackson, it triggered his evolution from a reader of fiction into an author in his own right. Published in the September 1913 issue, the letter elicited howls of protest from fans of Jackson's purple prose. Jackson's romance stories may have been trite and predictable, but they were also unquestionably popular.

In fairness to Lovecraft, he was responding to a letter in the July 1913 issue by F. V. Bennett of Hanover, Illinois. Bennett's semi-literate complaint about Jackson was so over the top that Lovecraft assumed the publisher was in on the joke and that it was satire in Jackson's defense. Lovecraft had touched a nerve, launching a monthly war of words between Jackson supporters and those that agreed with Lovecraft. It appears that Lovecraft's excessive verbiage antagonized the Jacksonian crowd far more than that of the grammar-deficient Bennett.

Lovecraft had badly underestimated Fred Jackson's fan base. The intelligent thing to do would have been to quietly avoid writing letters to editors until the whole thing blew over. But one Jackson supporter's message caught Lovecraft's eyes—John Russell of Tampa, Florida. Published in the November 1913 issue, Russell's reply was a four stanza tetrameter poem admonishing Lovecraft for picking on poor Fred Jackson.

Lovecraft himself readily admitted that Russell's use of tetrameter verse in his rebuttal was the only reason he didn't merely ignore the kerfuffle. And in the January 1914 issue Lovecraft



*John Russell and H. P. Lovecraft first interacted by debating the merits of author Fred Jackson in Argosy magazine.*

replied directly to Russell, and to Jackson's fans in general, with "Ad Criticos" and "Ad Criticos: Liber Secundus." The two went back and forth until fatigue began to set in among the other readers, as well as the proliferation of lousy poetry by late-comers. The two jointly issued one last poem, "The Critics' Farewell," in the October 1914 issue.

Lovecraft's responses were so much more literate than those of Jackson's supporters that his commentaries were noted by Edward F. Daas, the Official Editor of the United Amateur Press Association, who recruited him into the organization. Lovecraft embraced the schism-riddled amateur press movement, contributing poetry, essays, and criticism with astonishing productivity. He started with a July 1914 article urging members to preserve the language

from the scourge of colloquialism and slang usage. Considering his issues with Fred Jackson's prose, it is not surprising that by November of 1914 he was made the chairman of the UAPA Department of Public Criticism.

In the wake of Lovecraft's career, the other half of the dueling poets, Floridian John Russell, is often forgotten. He was not forgotten by Lovecraft himself—eight months after the "Jacksonian Wars," Lovecraft recruited Russell into the UAPA. By that time, the two had become correspondents and collaborators of a sort. When Russell's poem "Florida" ran in the *Tampa Times*, Russell sent a copy to Lovecraft, who submitted it to *The Evening News* in Providence. On December 16, 1914, the newspaper ran Russell's discussion of the pros and cons of Florida heat with Lovecraft's "New England" response about the cold. The two poems match; each consists of four stanza quatrains in an AABB rhyme scheme. The final line in each stanza utilized epistrophe, each verse ending with the word "hell" as a description of the local weather. Russell was a Scottish Highlander undoubtedly unprepared for the Floridian heat and humidity he found himself immersed in. Lovecraft's aversion to the cold is the stuff of legend—Hell is an appropriate word for two poets with an aversion to the temperatures they were waxing poetic over. Russell's involvement in amateur journalism and his correspondence with Lovecraft would taper off to a slow but steady rate soon after this publication.

John Russell was born July 19, 1871, in Penicuik, Scotland, the youngest son of James and Mary (nee Scott) Russell. Penicuik had experienced an economic boom as a paper mill town for Edin-

## HEAT AND COLD

I. Florida, By John Russell in the  
Tampa Times.

When the wild and wily moccasin  
glides gently round your tent,  
And when the rattler crawls around,  
on evil purpose bent,  
Or when the giddy 'gator roams  
around your only well,  
If then you're asked about your land,  
you'll answer: "Sure, it's HELL."

Then when the gay mosquito starts,  
It keeps you on the run,  
And the lovely little chigger starts in  
to help the fun;  
Then if a colony of ants begin to bite  
as well,  
If then you're asked about your land,  
you'll answer: "Sure, it's HELL."

And when the rainy season comes, the  
rain in torrents pours;  
You see the lightning's vivid flash and  
hear the thunder roars;  
You see your land beneath the flood,  
your tent is soaked as well,  
Then if you're asked about your land,  
you'll answer: "It's sure HELL."

But when the late September comes,  
the climate seems to change;  
Then peace and comfort once again  
come stealing o'er the range;  
Your hogs begin to fatten, and the  
sweet potatoes swell,  
Then if you're asked about your land,  
you'll say: "SURE, THIS BEATS  
HELL!"

II. New England, By H. P. Lovecraft

When the January tempest sweeps  
across the barren hill,  
And life itself can scarce withstand  
the marrow-piercing chill,  
When the snows drift o'er the pas-  
tures and choke the dreary dell,  
Then the old New England country  
seems a sort of frozen hell.

When the sky's nocturnal splendor  
mocks the frigid earth below,  
And Orion and the Dog-Star in the  
sterile silence glow,  
When not all the fires in heaven can  
the winter's cold dispel,  
Then we eye the cruel stars in vain,  
and call the land a hell.

When the mad, malignant billows  
rage along the rocky coast,  
And the ship with ice-clad rigging in  
the ocean storm is tossed;  
Then the anxious seaport cottagers  
look on the treacherous swell,  
And, thinking of the absent, call the  
savage clime a hell.

But when the North awakes in spring,  
and white gives way to green,  
And crystal brooks begin to flow, and  
flowers bedeck the scene;  
When rushes fringe the placid pool  
and leaflets shade the dell,  
Then we revel in the welcome  
warmth, without a thought of hell.

*The Providence, Rhode Island, Evening News ran poems by John Russell and H. P. Lovecraft on December 11, 1914.*

burgh's publishing center, ten miles north. Although his grandfather was a farmer in Linlithgowshire (West Lothian), John's father moved his family to Midlothian to become a grocer, with his sons following him into the business. Once his eldest son Thomas was familiar with the operation, James moved to Peebles to start another store.

The 1891 Scotland census showed John had also joined the family trade, working in his brother Thomas's grocery and general merchandise store as a draper (retailer of fabrics). John, apparently a fast learner, was soon in charge of the Penicuik store. Thomas and his father moved to Peebles and started another shop of groceries, provisions, and general merchandise, placing another brother, James, Jr., as the manager. Thomas and James repeated the process in Innerleithen. James soon retired, leaving his sons to run the stores that functioned as a chain but were individually owned.

The reliable pay and set hours of factory work still drew workers from the farms, but there was economic trouble on the horizon. More finely tuned to the bookkeeping side of the business, John saw the warning signs first. The cotton industry was collapsing across the UK as cheap American imports cut into the profit margins. Major industries were slowing down production as demand became sluggish. As the supply was cut back, demand pushed prices upward. In mill towns such as Penicuik, Peebles, and Innerleithen, it became increasingly difficult for a grocer to show a profit. Exacerbating the problem, Scottish populations, especially in the highlands, were declining as opportunities became plentiful overseas.

James Jr. began having trouble in Peebles. Thomas assumed control of that store as well. James, his wife, and son relocated to New Zealand in 1902. Thomas struggled to maintain both locations, finally going bankrupt in 1904. John struggled along, but it was apparent his shop was next. He handed the keys to his brother and headed to Canada. His brother would rebuild in Scotland (and go bankrupt again), but John Russell had his own concerns. He had moved to Canada in search of land. Instead, he found himself working on

someone else's farm. Farming was labor-intensive with high turnover rates as farm fortunes fluctuated with the harvest.

In Canada he discovered a cornucopia of magazines — particularly American publications. Publishers sent discounted issues to Canada to unload inventory. In what little spare time Russell had, he read. And the advertisements in the back of all the magazines were for land on Florida's Gulf coast around Tampa Bay. One ad boasted of plentiful land available for 10-acre truck lots or citrus grove for as little as \$1 per acre per month. The biggest land company, the Chicago-based North Tampa Land Company, had purchased 32,000 acres north of Tampa, predominantly land clear-cut by the turpentine industry and ready for development. John Russell heeded the call and arrived in Tampa in early 1913. Tampa was a logical destination as there was a strong Scottish presence in the area.

Russell was already part of this land boom—a full two-thirds of Florida real estate was being sold by mail to people who had never seen what they were buying. His first residence was twenty acres he purchased north of Tampa. Not anticipating farming as a fulltime occupation, he was looking for a paid position as well. One of his earliest poems, "Wanted—A Clock," appeared in the February 23, 1913, *Tampa Morning Tribune*. The poem questions why Tampa, so large and famous, doesn't have a clock downtown. Such an observation is the sort of thing a new arrival would notice, especially one spending his days downtown looking for work.

In the March 23, 1913, issue of the *Tribune*, his next poem appears on the front page as a rhyming opinion piece. "The No-Fence Law" took up the ongoing war for a No-Fence law prohibiting cattle and other domestic animals from roaming at large.

### The No-fence Law by John Russell

You'll understand  
That in this land  
We want a no-fence law, sir.  
So, if you can,  
You'll fix a plan



In which there is no flaw, sir.

The hog and cow,  
No matter how  
They trample down our produce,  
Go on their way,  
Alive and gay,  
And make our labor no use.

'Tis common sense  
That they should,  
Who keeps the hogs and cattle,  
And if they would,  
'Tis understood.  
'T would save us half the battle.

He ran another poem, "'I'll Hustle' Says Russell," in both the *Tribune* and the *Tampa Daily Times* as an advertisement. He used the return address 404½ Zack Street, Tampa. That is the address of the newly-opened Bruen & Webb Building, where his mortgage holder, North Tampa Land Company, had their offices. That is also the address used in his *Argosy* poems defending Fred Jackson.

The response to his ad resulted in job offers but nothing turned into a long-term position. In July of 1914, he published another poem, "by an Out-of-Work." Soon after, Russell found a job with Frank Booth, an insurance company manager and owner of J. S. Varn & Company Fire Insurance. Booth had begun buying up small insurance businesses in both Hillsborough County and its neighbor to the west, Pinellas. Frank Booth was also the son in the name of the R. J. Booth & Son Meats company in Clearwater. So it is within reason that Russell initially approached Booth for work in the butcher shop, based on his experience as a grocer in Scotland. Booth would have seen Russell's bookkeeping skills and placed him in the Tampa office, located at 404½ Zack Street.

Booth was a Clearwater resident, and most of his burgeoning business interests were there. Russell may have functioned as an office manager for the absent Booth. Booth was also elected to Clearwater City Council in 1916, starting a long career in Florida politics. That same year, Russell lived southeast of Tampa in Boyette, a smaller farming community connected to Tampa by a railroad. From one truck farm to another, these rapid moves indicate he

was establishing farms and then selling them for a profit, rather than farming them as an income source.

Russell continued to write poetry, particularly for the *Tribune*, sharing his success with Lovecraft, who occasionally submitted them to the Providence newspapers. Russell never embraced amateur journalism with the wholeheartedness Lovecraft did. But Russell also had less discretionary time between farming at home and working at the insurance office. But he did continue to write—Russell's poem "Why am I I?" appeared in the *Providence Evening News* on January 13, 1915, appearing on the page alongside Lovecraft's "The Power of Wine." Russell penned a rhyming commentary on a debate raging among the amateur journals about the merits of mixing meter in poetry versus consistency in form. His "Metrical Regularity; or Broken Metre" ran in Lovecraft's amateur publication *The Conservative*. The poem runs along using an AABB rhyme scheme in each stanza to the end, where he suddenly switches to ABCB, stressing the point of consistency both in word and form.

John Russell's primary concern with the UAPA was that he was the only member in Florida. He even wrote letters to the Tampa newspapers extolling the association's virtues and encouraging readers to write UAPA secretary Dowdell for particulars.

Between insurance and farming, Russell had saved enough to purchase a small house in Tampa by 1916. First, he wrote a letter he had been planning to write since leaving for Canada. On May 11, 1916, Lillian Mary Melver Braund of London arrived in NYC with a Florida destination. Four days later, she and John Russell were married in Tampa.

It was probably through his occupation as a grocer in Penicuik that Russell met his future wife. Lillian was training to be a teacher in London when she took a job with the Chicago-based Armour & Company meatpacking and food processing company's London office. Lillian became a sales rep for "Armour's Vigoral," a popular "fluid meat extract" health tonic marketing as a hot beverage. Armour was attempting to make inroads into the

## "I'LL HUSTLE," SAYS RUSSELL

ODD AD. ATTRACTS MUCH  
INTEREST.

Advertiser Seems Versatile and  
Has Gift of Expression in  
Easy Verse.

Quite a bit of interest has been shown by the people of Tampa, by an interesting "ad" inserted in *The Times* by John Russell, a Scotch farmer living eight miles north of the city, near Keystone Park.

Mr. Russell has decided that he would like to come into the city for a while and live, so inserted the following:

**"I'll Hustle," Says Russell.**  
Dear Editor, I'm stony broke,  
And badly need a situation.  
Now, honestly, it's not a joke;  
I really am in desperation.  
I'm Scotch and aged thirty-eight,  
And am a good and willing worker.  
I'm glad I truthfully can state,  
I never got the name of shirker.  
At advertising I am good.  
Likewise O. K. at window dressing.  
As shipper it is understood,  
I always have the others guessing.  
Of warehouse work, I've had enough  
To give me all the details dandy.  
And tho' as carpenter I'm rough,  
Still you will find I'm pretty handy.  
I'm game to tackle any place  
That pays well for good brain and muscle.  
So if a good thing you can trace,  
Just send along for me.

—John Russell.

Care North Tampa Land company,  
404 1-2 Zack street.

He came to Tampa last December from Canada, and purchased twenty acres of land from the North Tampa Land company, and has made quite a success in farming in Florida.

The "ad" has brought forth telephone calls, letters, and in some cases telegrams, and when Mr. Russell comes to Tampa next Wednesday he will have a job on his hands answering them.

*The Tampa Daily Times* for August 9, 1913,  
reported on the response to John Russell's ad.

British fluid meat market for its popular American brand. Lillian was one of the company's "demonstrators of advertisements" (to use the census job title), visiting grocers and pharmacies to encourage them to carry the array of

Armour liquid meat extract products and offer free samples to customers. Lillian had finished her training and was a teacher when the letter came.

In September, the newlyweds sold the farm in Boyette. They bought a newly built three-room house in the Tampa Heights neighborhood, a mile from downtown. They chose the location so John could be closer to his new job, assistant editor and head of advertising for a new weekly newspaper geared toward tourists, *Tampa Breeze*.

The *Breeze* was owned by local printer W. W. Averill. It is one of several newspapers named *Breeze* across the east coast; all were operated under the same business model that had cost Edith Minter so dearly. (See "The Other Minter: In Search of John T. Minter" in *THE FOSSIL* no. 386 for January 2021.) An experienced newspaper publisher would come into a town, establish a weekly paper, and then sell it to a local. The purchaser would basically be buying a printing press with a newspaper thrown in. The new owner, usually unqualified, would need to run the press, create content, find advertising, and arrange distribution. Most of these newspapers did not last long.

Russell's timing was both good and bad. Having sold the farm in Boyette, Russell avoided a February 1917 cold snap that devastated the citrus crop and wiped out all but the hardiest of truck crops. However, the financial quagmire created by the loss of so much produce meant no one had an advertising budget. *Tampa Breeze*, already beset by labor issues with the press operator, struggled without the advertising revenue. Russell left the newspaper, and with a bit of help from his former boss Frank Booth became a tax and rent collector. The *Tampa Breeze* struggled along for another few months before admitting defeat.

Still publishing poems in amateur journalism and corresponding with Lovecraft sporadically, Russell would make one last move. A position for an accountant had opened across the bay in Clearwater at a small lumberyard. Russell took the job and bought a house in Clearwater in 1918.

John and Lillian settled into their new life in Clearwater. Lillian began volunteering at the public library, using

her training as a teacher to volunteer in the children's library. John was working as an accountant and freelancing bookkeeping work in his spare time. It was decided Lillian needed to spend the summer in England. Between the heat and homesickness, she was developing neurasthenia.

In October, Lillian returned to Clearwater. Perhaps as a precursor to her state of mind, she listed London as her permanent home on the ship manifest. Lillian returned to the library. By 1921, her children's storytimes were a highly regarded asset of the library. John was busier than usual. 1921 was the start of a real estate boom in St. Petersburg/Pinellas County, followed by a severe hurricane causing significant destruction. Lumber and millwork demand soared.

At the end of October, Lillian played host to an old friend from England. The reminder of England appears to have triggered another bout of neurasthenia. Less than a year later, her health had deteriorated to the point where it became necessary for her to return to England.

The August 20, 1922, *Tampa Tribune* society column noted John had written to the church they attended, advising them of his wife's safe arrival in England. Lillian was in a nursing home in the London suburb of Walton-on-Thames. John concluded by saying he would be returning to Clearwater after a brief visit with his family in Scotland. Not mentioned was that Russell also planned a long overdue visit with the correspondent who first brought him into amateur journalism—Howard P. Lovecraft.

In 1922, Russell planned to meet Lovecraft in New York City on his way back to Florida. Much to Lovecraft's annoyance, Russell was a no-show. The matter was out of Russell's control. He was a passenger aboard the steamship *Scythia*, scheduled to arrive on Thursday, September 21. John Russell had made arrangements to meet his old correspondent on Saturday, but the *Scythia* arrived after midnight on Sunday. By the time Russell disembarked, cleared customs, and collected his luggage, it was already Monday morning, necessitating his heading straight to the railroad to make sure he

could catch his train to Florida. Russell believed Lovecraft was in Providence, unaware that Lovecraft was in New York, at Sonia Greene's apartment on Parkside Avenue in Brooklyn. As late as Friday, the 29th, Lovecraft would sporadically check at the Victor Hotel to see if Russell had left a message about missing his ship. It is probably safe to assume Russell had written Lovecraft a note and mailed it to Providence and it was still being forwarded back to New York.

Russell arrived back in Clearwater to somewhat unexpected news. The town had decided North Osceola Street needed to become a throughway, and the one thing stopping the process was John Russell's home. He was offered \$5000 for the house. Even allowing for the real estate boom prices at the time, it was significantly above its value. A home with additional rooms on a slightly larger lot in a better neighborhood was selling under \$4000. The generous terms may be courtesy of a behind-the-scenes intervention from Frank Booth, who was now in his second of ten years as mayor of Clearwater.

As 1923 was ushered in, it was already apparent Lillian would never return to Florida. The 1924 Clearwater Directory listed Russell's address as an RFD box, meaning Russell was not looking for a new house. He was probably staying outside the city at Booth's orange grove and taking the train into Clearwater to his job at Landess Lumber. Landess had ridden the crest of the construction boom. His one-man millwork shop had evolved into one of the largest lumber and millwork operations in Clearwater, with John Russell handling accounting. Russell remained in Clearwater to oversee the culmination of Landess's success. On June 10, 1924, W.W. Landess incorporated his business as Landess Lumber and Millwork Company. He became semi-retired at the same time, opting to remain a director of the company but placing his son as president. John Russell became the corporate secretary and treasurer.

Russell had already given up amateur journalism—there wasn't enough local interest to have a social gathering, let alone create a publication. Lovecraft was struggling to keep the UAPA



afloat, but the writing was on the wall. Instead, Russell helped launch the “Ty-pomaniacs,” a loosely defined social club for writers, cartoonists, and reporters who lived in the area. It didn’t last long, but he had a new distraction to deal with.

Landess Lumber had been contacted by a Midwestern consortium looking to invest in Tampa Bay’s burgeoning construction markets. And their offer was very generous. By the end of 1924, Landess Lumber and Millwork Company was renamed Paxton-Peavey Lumber Company by the new owners. As an officer of Landess, John Russell found himself with a financial windfall.

As 1925 began, Russell was growing increasingly concerned by the spiraling prices of land—property prices were quadrupling in less than one year. Frank Booth had begun quietly pulling out of the real estate market—prices were so high that speculators started to have trouble finding buyers. John Russell decided it was time to return to England. Lillian had been released from the nursing home. She moved in with her family in Dovercourt, a small seaside town in Essex, England.

As Russell settled his affairs in preparation for departure, the Florida land bubble finally burst. Property prices fell so quickly it started a panic. Florida’s real estate market crashed. Real estate investors went bankrupt under crushing mortgage debt. The larger cities had issued bonds to pay for the roads and city services required by these expansions. Now, populations were declining, failed development projects were simply abandoned, and the tax bases shrank accordingly. St. Petersburg was one of the worst-hit with suddenly underfunded projects.

If there had been any doubts in Russell’s mind, they were long gone. But he was determined the aborted visit with Lovecraft would not fail again. In April of 1925, John Russell arrived at Penn Station in New York City and checked in across the street at the Penn-Post Hotel. Lovecraft was living in Brooklyn Heights at 169 Clinton Street and hating every minute of it. His coterie of friends and correspondents were all that kept him from the absolute nadir of despair. A visit from such an important person from his past

was a call to action. Lovecraft not only called on Russell; he took him on a whirlwind tour of as much of New York as they could squeeze in. The next day, Russell departed for England. This departure was permanent. He would not return to the US.

The Russells settled in a cottage on Fronks Road in the resort town of Dovercourt, located near where the Stour and Orwell Rivers empty into the North Sea. Much of Lillian’s family lived within 20 miles of the location. Lovecraft and Russell continued to correspond. In September, Russell sent Lovecraft three postcards of Tudor houses in neighboring Ipswich. Lovecraft raved about the postcards in his following missive to his aunt. He mentions one postcard of Cardinal Thomas Wolsey’s birthplace, a Tudor timber frame building on Silent Street.

At least one of the remaining cards certainly had to have been of Ipswich’s most famous landmark, “The Ancient House,” dating back to the 15th century. The building sports detailed par-geting (ornamental plasterwork) and elaborate wood carvings around the front of the building. The four panels show the Tudor impression of the four known continents: Africa, America, Asia, and Europe. It is interesting to note Lovecraft wrote “The Call of Cthulhu” the following summer. That story includes the reference to the Fleur-de-Lys building in Providence, also a Tudor-style building with par-geting.

Lovecraft’s early *Argosy* opponent and casual correspondent had become a friend. He joined the December 1925 list of friends and family members to whom Lovecraft composed an original Christmas quatrain.

To old Britannia’s story’d strand  
My Yuletide greetings glide,  
As with a warm extended hand  
I brush the seas aside!

The “warm extended hand” of friendship didn’t last. The correspondence began to taper off as other distractions caused attention to move



Postcard of The Ancient House in Ipswich, England.

elsewhere. Lovecraft’s marriage had deteriorated to the point where he moved back to Providence in April, which triggered his most prolific fiction writing period. In Dovercourt, John Russell was starting to have health issues even as Lillian’s health continued to improve. Russell was diagnosed as having heart disease.

By 1928, Lovecraft had “The Colour out of Space” and “The Dunwich Horror” in his bibliography. Russell was bedridden most of the time with shortness of breath, chest pain, and an irregular heartbeat.

On December 24, 1929, John Russell died of chronic myocarditis. There is no mention of Russell’s passing in Lovecraft’s letters, and it is safe to assume he was not aware of the death. Russell’s estate, which went to Lillian, was valued at £1611 (\$118,000 in 2020 dollars). Between John’s savings, her weekly Widow’s Pension, followed by her Old Age Pension, Lillian lived comfortably in their cottage until her death on December 22, 1954, 2 days short of the 25th anniversary of John’s death. ♦

# They're Tearing Down My High School

by Ken Faig, Jr.



I FEAR that many of you are tired of reading about the fact that I was a 1966 graduate of Greenhills High School, in the famous “green town” bearing the same name fifteen miles north of downtown Cincinnati. I wrote about the 1963 murder of my classmate Patty Rebholz in *THE FOSSIL* for October 2017, then I wrote about classmate Craig Marshall Smith’s extended meditations on Greenhills in *THE FOSSIL* for January 2021.

The best amateur writing is usually personal, but I think there is a danger the readers of *THE FOSSIL* may be all Greenhillsed out (to coin a word) by this time. Yes, there was a school newspaper bearing the title *Conestoga*. I never worked on it, but I did once contribute a column of political satire which probably saved the day for me when it came time for National Honor Society enrollments. I was such a deadbeat when it came to extracurricular activities that it was proposed to exclude me from honor society membership. But that column of political satire constituted an extracurricular activity of sorts, so I was duly enrolled in the National Honor Society.

When the green town of Greenhills was first erected by the federal government in 1935-38, the Community Center building was the center of village activities. It housed grades K-12 of the local school district but in the early days it also accommodated religious services, scout meetings, movies and many other activities. The 1938 building, graced by some remaining WPA murals, is still owned by what is now called the Winton Woods School District. It is rather underutilized, but in addition to a few school district offices, also provides space for the Greenhills Historical Society and the Greenhills Pioneer Alumni Association.

In the fifties, the Greenhills School District was busy erecting new primary schools to accommodate the education of the emerging Baby Boom generation (including yours truly). The district superintendent, Ray A. Young (1901-1990), was known for his prowess in obtaining voter approval for tax levies to fund school construction. After all, many of the voters were the heads of young families who had moved to the Greenhills area for the opportunities it afforded their families. It wouldn't do for the young heirs to emerge undereducated.

I attended these newly-built primary schools

through the sixth grade, but then for grades 7-9 I attended school (with the high schoolers) at the Community Building. Things were so crowded that we went half-days for at least one year. I felt sorry for the teachers, having to teach two full sessions of school every day. Finally, the district bit the bullet and decided to construct a new high school. I think the new high school, constructed across Farragut Road adjoining the athletic fields, was ready for business by the fall of 1963. We needed the boost of a new facility after the murder of our classmate Patty Rebholz during the summer of 1963. The Community Building became a junior high school, housing grades 7-8.

Eventually, the Greenhills and Forest Park school districts merged to form the Winton Woods district. Our brand new high school of 1963 became Winton Woods Middle School, housing grades 7-8, after the graduation of the final Greenhills High School class in 1991. Sometime after the turn of the century, the old stands on the football field were torn down. They were metal construction with wooden benches, and I presume they were deemed a hazard by the district's insurers. In any case, down they came, and I think all the faithful fans who attended all those sometimes freezing, sometimes rainy Friday night games shed more than a few tears. The one time I went to one of the football games, I got kicked out for walking around instead of staying in my seat and cheering. I guess you weren't supposed to leave your seat except to go to the restroom.

I never dreamed I would outlive the “new” Greenhills High School building which greeted us for the 1963-64 school year, but I was wrong. Winton Woods is reconfiguring its school campuses. The old primary schools are closing, to be consolidated in a new K-6 facility being built where the former Greenhills High School football field used to be. The new K-6 facility is scheduled to open in September 2021. As part of this development, the former Greenhills High School, latterly the Winton Woods Middle School, will be torn down. I suspect it will be gone by the time school opens at the new K-6 facility in the fall of 2021. The high school was no architectural gem. Probably, its most notable feature was the clamshell-roofed auditorium. The distinctive roof developed cracks, and had to be reinforced with a surrounding rim of metal girders.

I have to hand it to the Winton Woods School District, they were nothing if not fair. The old Forest Park High School is coming down at the same time as the



old Greenhills High School. It will be replaced by a new Winton Woods grades 7-12 facility, also slated to open in the fall of 2021. So, by the time you read these lines, both of the old rival schools will be gone. The Winton Woods district has gotten less than stellar grades in recent years, so hopefully the new facilities will recharge faculty and student batteries and help to attract new families to the area. The 1938 Greenhills Community Building remains to remind residents of their “green town” heritage. It is only a pity it is so under-utilized. When I visited in 2016 for my fiftieth high school reunion, the really impressive auditorium/gymnasium space was being used for furniture storage.

But I have to acknowledge that everything wasn't always all hunky-dory in “green town.” The Roosevelt administration restricted residency in Greenhills—originally, all the residents were renters of federally-owned property—to whites. Even after the federal government surrendered ownership in 1950, restrictive covenants enforced by local realtors kept Greenhills and adjoining parts of its school district white-only. In fact, Greenhills was noted as a “sunset” town, which meant that any blacks who did work in the community had to be out before the onset of darkness. I remember that two of the Community Building janitors were black—one of them, Clarence Page, was a noted local musician.

Forest Park, to the north of Greenhills, had its own racial battles, but had significant segments of black population from early on. By the time I was in high school in 1962-66, a few black faces had begun to appear among the underclassmen. Most of them came from the area south of the village of Greenhills itself. I don't know when Greenhills was finally integrated. You can look at many of the yearbooks online on classmates.com, and by the 1970s black students were a significant part of the student body.

But my graduating class of 1966 was all white. We didn't realize there was anything wrong with that. There were always Southern sympathies among Cincinnati residents—many Kentucky “hillbillies” drove to jobs in Cincinnati. Some of the cars in the Greenhills High School parking lot had “Stars and Bars” plateholders. Sometimes, students dressed in blackface for plays presented in that distinctive clamshell-roofed auditorium. Occasionally, we would have lively discussions in our classrooms about the then-emerging Civil Rights movement. Students, reflecting the views of their parents, generally opposed it, while teachers were more defensive.

Soon—if not already—the school where we atten-



ded will be reduced to dust. It did have a distinctive setting—looking down over the “lower fields” toward the woods and Winton Lake. Hopefully, much of the beauty of the setting will be preserved in the campus of the new K-6 school. I have to believe that we the student body were beautiful, too, despite the defects of our environment. The truth is that we, too, along with our school, will be going down to dust before too many more years elapse. I will be nearly ninety

years old if I survive to mark the one hundredth anniversary of the opening of Greenhills, Ohio on April 11, 2038. I hope the Community Building will survive as a reminder of the “lively experiment” of the green towns. I don't delude myself by imagining that the Community Building will house a national green town museum by the time the Greenhills centenary arrives, but it is in itself a reminder of the hopes on which Greenhills and the other green towns were founded. The other two green towns, by the way, were Greenbelt, Maryland and Greendale, Wisconsin. Others were envisioned, but never built.

The human race doesn't change. We still hope for better things for our children and our grandchildren. We know that times change and old things—including us—pass. The photographer Vivian Maier once likened life to a Ferris wheel—we get on, and enjoy our allotment of revolutions, until it is time for us to get off and surrender our places to the coming generation. The stairwells of the Greenhills Community Building are mostly quiet today, but I can assure any visitor that they once resounded with the steps of students passing from class to class. The campus of the new K-6 school will occupy the site of the former football field, where so many hard-fought games were played to the cheers of the fans in the long-gone stands.

If we believe in Einsteinian spacetime, we can take refuge in the thought that nothing ever perishes. Spacetime is an akashic record in which everything endures. Time  $t$  is just one of the four coordinates ( $x, y, z, t$ ) you need to look up any happening, anywhere or anytime. Perhaps our memories are our defective viewing device during our lifetimes. What remains after it's our turn to get off Maier's Ferris wheel remains to be seen. A more perfect spacetime viewing mechanism than our memories? A multi-verse where we can take a look at all the “what ifs” which tend to bedevil our lives? Regardless of what eternity holds, we can always keep hoping that the future will be better and offer more opportunities, than did the past and this ephemeral present moment.

So that's my final Greenhillsian meditation. Back to ajar for my next column. ◆

# NAPA Cancels Convention, Meets Online

by Dave Tribby

FOR THE SECOND consecutive year, the National Amateur Press Association canceled its annual convention due to concerns about the Covid-19 pandemic. President Michelle Klosterman directed officers to prepare their usual convention reports for publication in the September *National Amateur*. Because the constitution has no provision for remote voting, she once again asked incumbent officers to serve another term. NAPA hopes to hold its 2022 convention near Burnsville, North Carolina next July.



At the end of March Secretary-Treasurer Bill Boys received notification that Wells Fargo Bank is petitioning Pennsylvania's Attorney General to terminate a trust established by Alma "Rusty" Weixelbaum in the early 1960s. NAPA receives 10% of the annual payout, currently around \$1,900 per year, or about half of NAPA's income. Alma was a member from 1940 until her death in 1962, and served as president in 1955-56. She was an active publisher (mainly *Rusty's Comet*) and a frequent participant at conventions.

When she set up a trust to support her favorite organizations, Alma chose First Pennsylvania Banking and Trust Company, one of the oldest banks in the nation, to manage it. But financial crises over the years brought mergers with other banks and finally acquisition by Wells – who decided that \$400,000 was too small for them to manage. The Attorney General must decide whether or not to allow the termination of the trust, and if so how to distribute the assets. Bill put to-

gether and submitted a memo presenting the case for NAPA to receive its share. He is awaiting announcement of the decisions.

In May, member Sinoun Chea, a website design professional, completed a complete rework of NAPA's website ([www.AmateurPress.org](http://www.AmateurPress.org)). The original content remains, but it is presented in a more professional, modern, and user-friendly fashion that is easier to navigate. It adjusts format between desktop and mobile users, and makes it easy for new members to sign up or current members to renew their membership. The original website was designed by Arie Koelewyn in 1999, with an update by Jon McGrew in 2009.

Although it did not hold a convention, NAPA hosted an online meeting via Zoom on October 13. No official business was possible, but it was an opportunity to talk and exchange ideas. Twelve members showed up, and the call lasted about two hours and ten minutes. Topics included projects for the bundle, submitting NAPA's "Electronic Bundle" files to the University of Wisconsin Digital Collection, collecting amateur journals, the *National Amateur* clearing house, laureate judging, recruiting new members, and the Weixelbaum trust.

Reports in the September *National Amateur* covering July 2020 through June 2021 show total equity (checking and savings) increased from \$29,250.71 to \$32,059.56. The mailer sent 83 bundles in June. Members whose deaths were reported during the year: Dr. Horace A. Braggins, Jr., Valaire Brosey, and David Celani. ♦



NAPA members on October 13 Zoom call: Tom Parson, Dave Tribby, Bill Boys, Arie Koelewyn, the Brosey family

(Elijah, Marc, & Alice), Jon McGrew, James Hedges, Gary Bossler, Michelle Klosterman, and Alice Stickler.



# AAPA Swaps Top Officers, Welcomes New Mailer

by Dave Tribby

THE AMERICAN Amateur Press Association did not hold an election to select its officers for the 2021-2023 term that began on October 1. In 2011 the group modified its by-laws to allow members who file for offices to be elected without a formal vote:

After the filing deadline, if there is no competition for any office(s), the Board of Directors may declare the candidate(s) who filed as being elected to the respective office for which he/they filed.

Since this amendment was adopted, there have never been any competitive filings, and hence no need to hold an election for officers.

For the new term, the incumbent president and vice president traded jobs.

Tommy White, AAPA's first Black president, took over the job in 2018 when Fred Moe unexpectedly resigned. Tommy, who had completed a year as VP, succeeded Fred and in 2019 agreed to serve a full two-year term. After Tommy left the office of VP, Fish Davidson volunteered to serve the rest of that term, then agreed to his own full term beginning in 2019. This year Fish filed for president and Tommy returned to being VP.

When the July 5 filing deadline passed, incumbents Edwin Feliu (official editor) and John Carvalho (secretary-treasurer) had filed for an additional term, but nobody had signed up to replace Heather

Lane as mailer, a job she took on in January 2016.

Under the pre-2011 rules, members would have received a ballot with no candidate for mailer, but with space for a write-in. After the mid-August deadline to return ballots, an election report would be due to the incumbent president by September 10, who would then

notify the top write-in candidate of his or her election. If that person did not wish to serve, the new president would have to find someone to appoint. This process could delay the start of the search for a volunteer until late September. A vacancy in the mailer position would result in confusion as publishers would not know where to mail their submissions.

Secretary-Treasurer John Carvalho noted the modified by-laws require an election *only* when there is a contested race—so when no one is running for an office the Board has the authority to declare the office open and immediately start the search for a volunteer. The president-elect took on the task of publicizing the vacancy. Knowing that finding a volunteer would take time, Heather agreed to mail the October and November bundles. In mid-September Fish found a willing replacement, Katherine Watt, who joined in June 2021 and lives in Stare College, Pennsylvania. She will start mailing bundles in December.

In other news, on September 8 PayPal notified AAPA's secretary-treasurer, "After a review we decided to permanently limit your account as we found potential risk associated with it. You'll not be able to conduct any further business using PayPal. ... Any bank or credit card information that's linked to your PayPal account cannot be removed nor can it be added to another account. You can still log in and see your account information but you cannot send or receive money."

Attempts by John to appeal these restrictions or get further information on supposed "high-risk behaviour" were rebuffed by PayPal. Hours of research by John showed that alternative services, such as Google Pay and Venmo, were closely tied to PayPal and thus would not be allowed to transact business with AAPA's bank account. John noted that about 21% of AAPA revenue came from PayPal between August 2020 and August 2021. PayPal collected an average of 4.5% in fees during that time, and their rates were recently raised significantly.

As of August 31, 2021, AAPA's bank balance stood at \$6883.71, up from \$6770.05 at the beginning of the fiscal year on October 1, 2020. During the same period, membership dropped from 145 to 140. The following members were reported as deceased: June Bassemir, David Celani, Jiyani Lawson, Delores Miller, Stanislas Pekala, and Jon Person.



Tommy White



Fish Davidson

## Eight or Twelve Pages?

by Dave Tribby

IT FELS GOOD to get back to a twelve-page issue of THE FOSSIL after three eight-pagers. That's mainly thanks to the fine lead-off article by Fossil Dave Goudsward. Thanks also to President Ken Faig who always has his column submitted well in advance.

Several years ago I calculated that our \$15/year dues allows production of quarterly 12-page issues. When we print larger issues the postage gets expensive because they are too thick to fold over and must be sent in what the Post Office calls a large envelope. Here's the cost of each issue in volume 117:

Issue	Pages	Printing	Postage	Total
Oct 2020	12	\$53.37	\$22.75	\$76.12
Jan 2021	8	\$35.58	\$21.18	\$56.76
Apr 2021	8	\$35.58	\$19.10	\$54.68
Jul 2021	8	\$34.47	\$18.55	\$53.02

Postal rates went up in August by 3 cents per domestic envelope, and it's likely printing will become more expensive as well. Due to the thrifty volume 117, we have enough in recent income to absorb price increases without raising dues. If someone has a good story idea, I'll be glad to print larger issues.

Section 3 of The Fossils by-laws directs publishing, "as near-quarterly as funds from the treasury or contributed for this purpose permit." Some years the publishing schedule has been irregular — for example, no issues at all were published in 1966. I plan on continuing a quarterly schedule, but the content and size will depend on article submissions and story ideas.



Dave Goudsward's piece about John Russell is another offshoot from his next book *Adventurous Liberation: H. P. Lovecraft in Florida*. Completion of that book continues to be delayed by research facilities closed due to Covid restrictions. He recently wrote, "I'm hoping to get it out this year, but it is going to be close." He also is getting air play: "Just did an interview with an Oklahoma NPR affiliate about Lovecraft's use of Caddo County in his Zealia Reed Bishop 'revisions.' Apparently I am becoming a Halloween commodity."



Dave's references in the article to Pinellas County, Florida, reminded me of some personal family history. My grandmother's oldest brother made his way to St. Petersburg after serving as a pilot in World War I. Dad told the story that his Uncle Stanley was involved in a number of land speculation deals in the 1920s. He had

just made a big sale when the bottom fell out of the market. With the cash on hand, he bought Huggins Auto Parts for less than the value of the inventory, and ran that store until he retired in 1959. After Dad graduated from high school in 1939, he split time working on the family farm in Indiana during the summer and selling auto parts for his uncle in Florida during the winter. He served as a pilot in World War II. After discharge, he got married and made his home permanently in Florida. My three sisters still live in Pinellas.

Grandma Tribby's other brother, Chester, left Indiana for the West, eventually graduating from Stanford University and living in the San Francisco Bay Area. Fifty years after Chet's graduation, I was accepted at his alma mater and ended up living nearby. Funny how decisions two brothers made over a century ago still affect the family today.



As Fossil webmaster, I receive the occasional "why did they send me that?" email message. This one arrived in mid-August:

Hi there,

We're currently working on behalf of a major industry-leading client trying to enhance their brand via editorial content.

Whilst looking for opportunities, we came across your website [thefossils.org](http://thefossils.org)

Please let us know the pricing and options to place sponsored content on your website.

We can provide you with a high-quality piece of content, fitting your website audience. We'll include citations and images, so as to make the content naturally resonate with your readers.

Furthermore, if you are interested in publishing sponsored content on websites/blogs owned by your company, please send us more details with the below info:

- Website URLs
- Pricing
- Linking restrictions (Nofollowetc)
- Any restrictions about the content or outgoing links

Let me know and we can get something started.

Best Regards,

Pauline Baker, Head of International Sales  
Audiencr.com, London

That does *not* sound like the content I want for THE FOSSIL! But if you have researched an aspect of amateur journalism, or written reminiscences about your own time in the hobby, let me know. ♦



# 1999 AAPA Convention in Little Rock

by Dave Tribby



Gordon Rouze

OVER 50 members and family convened in Little Rock, Arkansas, during May 13-16 for the AAPA's 1999 annual convention hosted by John Horn at his Shooting Star Press. Greg McKelvey took numerous photos, a few shown here and more available online at [aapainfo.org/cons/](http://aapainfo.org/cons/) ♦



Dean Rea, Ken Rystrom, & Len Carrick



Ivan Snyder



Jack Scott



Bill Venrick



Guy Miller



Mike O'Connor



Lee Hawes



Helen Wesson



Rich Hopkins



Les Boyer & Fred Liddle



Charlie Bush



Greg McKelvey



John Horn

## Fossils' Fiscal Year 2021

by Dave Tribby

DURING THE fiscal year that ended August 14, 2021, The Fossils saw a net growth of three members (to 28) and a loss of one subscription (to 3). The treasury grew by \$197.31, to \$4,323.95.

Two husband and wife pairs became members during the year. Long-time subscribers Mel and Linda Shivvers converted to a joint membership in November. Mel is the son of Martha Shivvers, a Fossil from 1994 until her death in 2017. Cam and Rachael Shepherd also became Fossils in November. Cam is the son of Fossil John Shepherd, who wrote about his father Wilson in THE FOSSIL no. 379 for April 2019.

One membership expired, that of Walter Hitt who had joined June 29, 2020. No deaths were reported.

Here are the financial details:

### Income for Fiscal Year 2021:

Memberships (20)	\$360.00
Subscriptions (3)	\$40.00
Donations (6)	\$102.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$502.00</b>

### Expenses for Fiscal Year 2021:

THE FOSSIL - printing	\$159.00
THE FOSSIL - postage	\$81.58
Website - ISP	\$24.95
Website - Domain	\$15.16
Bank Fees	\$24.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$304.69</b>

<b>NET INCOME (OR LOSS)</b>	<b>\$197.31</b>
<b>END OF YEAR TREASURY BALANCE</b>	<b>\$4,323.95</b>

The donations came from Ivan Snyder (\$10), Melvin & Linda Shivvers (\$25), Jack Scott (\$45), Kent Clair Chamberlain (\$7), Peter Schaub (\$10), and Michelle Klosterman (\$5). ♦

# The Fossils Membership List

October 1, 2021

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Special Collections, Mem Library Rm 976, 728 State Street, Univ of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706-1494

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*\*Note: The Fossils Board of Trustees granted life membership to Martin M. Horvat.* ♦

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## The Fossil

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

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