

The Fossil

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President's Message

Thorwald Mauritzen: Another Socialist in the Ranks

by Ken Faig, Jr.



President Ken Faig, Jr.

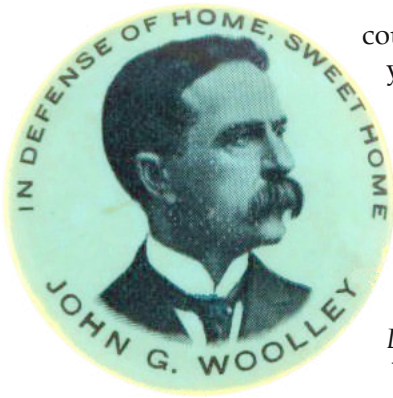
THORWALD MAURITZEN was born in Stavanger, Norway on June 11, 1882, the son of Hans Olaf Mauritzen (1856-1915) and Martine Asbjornsdotter (1856-1940). His paternal grandparents were Torkild Mauritzen of Hogsfjord, Rogaland, Norway and Grunhild Aslagsdotter. His second baptismal name was Gregorius or Gregory although he more commonly used George as his middle name later in life. Thorwald (commonly known as Thor in the amateur journalism hobby) was the eldest of a family of ten children. He and his parents emigrated from Norway to Chicago in 1885. Later-born children included brothers Osborn (b. 1886), Henry "Harris" (b. 1894), Mauritz (b. 1896), and Charles (b. 1898) and sisters Bertha (b. 1889), Grace (b. 1890), Alice (b. 1903), and Margaret (b. 1908). His father supported the large family as a painter. Thor Mauritzen died in Los Angeles on September 19, 1952, while the McCarthy era was still in full bloom. Of Thor's siblings, his sisters Bertha (who married Fred Jensen) and Grace (who married Alfred Halvorsen) and his brothers Harris and Mauritz eventually joined him in Los Angeles.

Mauritzen self-published his autobiography in 1950 under the title *Printer's Ink on a Shoestring; A Rebel Who Wouldn't Stay Put, Cowboy, Hobo, Rancher, Soap-Boxer, Editor and Publisher*, currently available in a reprint edition from Literary Licensing, LLC (alternative title *Oh Dakota Land, Sweet Dakota Land, Being an Attempt to Set Down a Few Incidents in the Hectic and Varied Life of T. G. Mauritzen*). The original price from Thor's Book Service was \$1.00, but the reprint editions will cost interested readers \$21.95.

Of his early life, Thor wrote: "Up until my fourteenth year, I lived the life of the usual city boy—with only the streets, alleys and back yards in Chicago as my playgrounds." However, he was also a voracious reader, and claimed to have read over 1,000 books from the Chicago Public Library. When the family was undergoing hard times in 1896, an uncle took Thor to help with chores on his farm in Kimball, South Dakota. Eventually tiring of the hard work, Thor ran away and traveled "hobo style" back to Chicago. He obtained a job in the print shop at Morgan & Wright's tire factory, and while he eventually lost the job, the stain of printer's ink remained on his fingers. With help from a neighbor boy, he issued the first number of his *Welcome News* in February 1898. In this era, amateur magazines did not abstain from paid advertising and subscriptions. (Some even paid contributors.) Thor would continue to issue *Welcome News*, off and on into the 1940s.

Like many other amateur journalists, Thor enjoyed having a "BIG MAIL." He benefited from the amateur journalism departments which ran in magazines like *Golden Hours*. He wrote in his autobiography: "...through *Golden Hours* I became acquainted with the fact that there were other boys and girls who edited and published small magazines." He joined the United Amateur Press Association in the fall of 1898 and proudly recorded on the front page of *Welcome News* the slogan, "Devoted to the Interest of Amateur Journalism, Golden Hours Club and Mail Order Trade." Thor would join *The Fossils* in 1944.

He had another stint on his uncle's farm in South Dakota, and found that he enjoyed the picnics, socials and dances sponsored by the Norwegian community. But he soon returned to his family in Chicago, where the 1900 census found him at 1031 N. Rockwell Street in Ward 15 on June 1, 1900. An address by Prohibition Party presidential candidate John G. Woolley set his



Prohibition Party candidate

course for the next several years. "I still think Woolley the greatest orator I've ever heard," he commented in his autobiography. He sold *Welcome News* to a mail order firm, and began to work for a Prohibition paper, the *Home Defender*, whose first number emerged in December 1900. The 1901 Chicago directory listed Thorwald

Mauritzen as business manager for the *Home Defender*. During his career as a Prohibitionist, he got to know Carrie Nation, who supported the *Home Defender* financially. Thor's main job was drumming up subscriptions and donations. *Home Defender* tried to appeal to youth, and launched an amateur journalism department in its December 1903 number.

Thor's father Hans was a strong union supporter, but both parents were devout Lutherans, and Thor was repelled by the anti-religious bias of some of the socialist orators he heard. "I was slow to accept socialism," he wrote in his autobiography, but accept it he eventually did, wholeheartedly, joining the Socialist Party in 1909. Following a trip back to Norway in 1905, Thor severed his connection with the *Home Defender*, and revived *Welcome News*. This incarnation of *Welcome News* lasted until April 1909, when Thor once again sold the paper to a mail order concern to devote his full-time attention to the same business. He wasn't yet done with the Prohibition cause, helping to organize a Chautauqua tent campaign in Illinois during the summer of 1907.

Perhaps it was a fascination with land ownership which next led Thor and his friend Konrad Iverson to take up government land claims in Bliss, Idaho. They obtained arid, unirrigated tracts, and had little success with their endeavors. Thor spent the winter of 1913-14 back in Chicago, where he launched a successful candy business. However, the lure of the land proved irresistible, and that summer Thor returned to Idaho, bringing along his sister Grace and his brother-in-law Alfred Halvorsen. His sister was a good cook, which relieved some of the hardships of life on the land. But life in the city called once more, and Thor took the hobo route back to Chicago, where he found his once-blooming candy business mysteriously gone.

Thor soon became connected with *The Boy Magazine*, which was sponsored by the Anti-Cigarette League. Ralph McGraw ran the amateur journalism department to begin with, but Charles D. Isaacson took over when he left. Thor took a two-month leave to utilize a rail pass to visit his Idaho holdings and take in the

Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco in 1915. Thor's father died on November 18, 1915, aged fifty-nine. Thor handed in his resignation at *The Boy Magazine* in April 1916. Here intervened the one romantic relationship with the opposite sex narrated in Thor's autobiography:

During the winter of 1915-16, I met a young lady from Oklahoma at the office of the Socialist Party (National Office). We became quite friendly at the first meeting and it was not long before we were much together, attending shows, party meetings, and as a result we agreed to be married. She was an active Socialist, Methodist, a school teacher, and had been brought up on the farm. The idea of ranching in Idaho appealed very much to her as an ideal life. We set the date and all seemed settled, but she had some property interests which she felt should be disposed of, and so she decided to take the trip back to Oklahoma, agreeing to be back in time for our wedding, and trip to Idaho.

What was my surprise to receive a telegram shortly after her arrival home, that she had met an old sweetheart, whom she had not seen in several years; seems he had prospered and had a big ranch in Montana, which apparently made a strong appeal to her, plus the fact that she had once been his sweetheart, so I lost out. I sent them my best wishes and found that my heart did not miss many beats over the parting.

Thor remained a lifelong bachelor. This incident was apparently the closest he ever came to marriage. He was a friendly man, with good social relationships with both men and women. His closest friendships, however, seem to have been with men. When he lived in Seattle, he shared a houseboat with several male friends. He was an effective persuader and a good salesman, talents which he put to good use in the prohibitionist, socialist and union press and as a publisher and mail order dealer.

After another attempt at farming in Idaho, Thor arrived in Seattle in 1916. He replenished his treasury with a stint apple-picking in eastern Washington state. Returning to Seattle, he boarded with a cousin and obtained a job working a debit for the Prudential Insurance Company. By 1917, he had resorted again to a mail order business in the Booth building and a novelties store at 905 East Pine. Thor maintained his contacts with socialist and labor interests in Seattle. He and his associates lobbied against the war, which finally arrived in April 1917, but drew the line against active subversion of the government. He became associated with the anti-war paper the *Seattle Call*, whose first issue emerged on July 26, 1917.

Most of the other local newspapers, and the government, were strongly opposed to the stances taken by the *Call*, and when Thor was called to the district attorney's office to defend his paper, amateur journalist J. Roy Erford, an attorney, came to lend his support. Thor narrated the result in his autobiography: "After two

hours of grilling, he [the district attorney] decided that he had no case against me. I am sure having Erford with me was largely responsible for his decision." Erford, who served on the local draft board, advised Thor to get shipyard work to remain exempt. When he registered for the draft on September 12, 1918, Thor was residing at 3409 Lane Street in Seattle and had his own phonograph business. He named his mother Mrs. Martine Mauritzen of 4143 W. School Street in Chicago as his nearest relative. The 1920 Seattle directory listed him with a phonograph & record business at 1020 Pike, residing at 1417 Minor Avenue.

Thor finally joined the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W. or "Wobblies") while residing in Seattle. He supported what he perceived as a social experiment in the Soviet Union, but never reconciled himself to atheistic communism, retaining a strong church connection. He wrote in his autobiography: "Socialism appealed to me because it seemed to offer hope, a better life and security, work for all and the possibility of plenty for all. I still have that faith." After twenty years, he withdrew his support of the Soviet Union in the 1930s after socialist visitors reported human rights violations there.

Thor first appeared in the Los Angeles voter registry in 1922 and remained on the voting rolls through his death in 1952. His business was listed as railroad in 1922, salesman in 1924, organizer in 1928 and publisher in 1930 and later. His party affiliation, Republican in 1922-28, was listed as Democrat or Socialist in later years. In 1928, he was elected president of the United Amateur Press Association (Erford-Noel faction) at its convention in Los Angeles. When the 1930 census was enumerated, he was a lodger with Levi U. Lacy on West 6th Street in Los Angeles. He stated his business

as magazine editor, while his landlord ran a postal service. In 1928-30 he edited a magazine titled *Sports & Hobbies*. Until 1933 and again in 1935-36, he edited a magazine called *All Outdoors*.

The final chapter of Thor's autobiography, "I Like the Depression," relates how he coped financially with barter-based exchanges. By 1935, he had revived *Welcome News*, whose subscription list had grown to 15,000 by 1942. When the 1940 census was enumerated, Thorwald Mauritzen was a resident of the Baltimore Hotel at 501 S. Los Angeles Street in Los Angeles. He was 58 years old, single, with an eighth grade education, and worked as a publisher-editor. His mother died in Chicago on April 19, 1940, at the age of eighty-four. When he registered for the draft in 1942, Thor was still residing in the Baltimore Hotel and was self-employed (as an editor-publisher) at 404 West 9th Street. He named his sister Bertha Jensen of 5306 Lincoln Avenue in Los Angeles as the person who would always know his address.

Frederic Faries Heath (see my column in *THE FOSSIL* no. 384, July 2020) and Thorwald Gregory Mauritzen were not alone among amateur journalists who advocated socialism as a remedy for social and economic problems. Both played an important part in the socialist movement as well as making contributions to the amateur journalism hobby.

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Mauritzen, T. G., *Printer's Ink on a Shoestring; A Rebel Who Wouldn't Stay Put, Cowboy, Hobo, Rancher, Soap-Boxer, Editor and Publisher*, Los Angeles, CA: Thor's Book Service, 1950.

Nation, Carry A., *The Use and Need of the Life of Carry A. Nation*, Alpena Pass, AR: [the author], 1908. See p. 321.

O'Connor, Harvey, *Revolution in Seattle: A Memoir*, Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2009. See p. 90 *et seq.* ♦

From *THE FOSSIL* No. 129 for January 1951

Welcome News

by Thor Mauritzen

Editor's Note: Thor Mauritzen wrote an account of his career for the January 1951 issue of *THE FOSSIL*. Much of it overlaps with the biographies referenced by Ken Faig in the previous article, but the following excerpts highlight his connection to amateur journalism.

I had discovered several juvenile magazines that told of the wonderful adventures of boys in all parts of the world, and in all sorts of vocations, and new ways of making money, from selling specialties from a wagon to editing and publishing magazines. That was my first knowledge of amateur journalism.

Now I was sure that I had found my life's work. I

would publish a magazine. In those days most amateur magazines carried mail order advertising. I remember that the official organ of the United Amateur Press Association, *The Little Star*, published at Mankato, Minnesota, by Ed. B. Howe, carried a half-page ad for Montgomery Ward & Co., and a half-page ad for the National Correspondence Institute, Washington, D. C., plus the usual small mail order ads.

So, I decided that I would publish my own magazine. My chum who lived across the street owned a 6 x 9 Kelsey Press, but had very little type so we both set out to buy some in a print shop on West Madison;

we were able to buy quite an assortment of body type eight-point, and some display type.

After school we were busy setting up the type for a 6 x 9 paper. It took a month to set four pages, neither of us having any knowledge of typesetting. Finally we were ready to print our first edition, and on the night the extras came out with the story of the blowing up of the battleship Maine we had completed the printing of the first issue of *Welcome News*!

It was late September of that year before another issue came out. ...

I was offered what to me appeared a liberal amount for *Welcome News*, so I sold it to a mail order house who used it as a house organ. Up until the May 1900 issue, it was strictly an amateur paper with contributed matter from amateur writers of that day and news of amateur journalism affairs. I was a member of the United Amateur Press Association, but did not take any active part in its affairs.

In the fall of 1900, I met an old friend, Henry Hendricksen, who was at the time printing an amateur paper called *The Amateur Leader*. Henry and I had been good friends before I left for South Dakota, the first time. I had been sending him my *Welcome News*.

He had a little hand-press in his bedroom on which he printed *The Amateur Leader*. We had both become ardent Prohibitionists and decided to do something about it. We pooled our resources and in December 1900, issued the first number of *The Home Defender*. The heading, in addition to the name, carried the slogan, *In Defense of Home Sweet Home*,—Wooley. The second number, January 1901, announced our support of The Prohibition Party, and also carried a small nine-line, six-point news item about Carry Nation, who later adopted the same slogan, that she was the "Home Defender."

It was only a small twelve-page-and-cover magazine, but in less than five years it grew to a large sixteen-page, eleven by sixteen, with a paid subscription list of over 50,000. Later toward the end of 1904, Carry Nation became one of the editors and financial supporters. Through a rather crooked deal both Henry and I were frozen out of our control of the *Home Defender*. ... However, we did get money for our stock. We took this money and re-established *Welcome News* with Henry as editor and myself as business manager. Although at this time it was a religious journal of the fundamentalist type, it did continue to support the prohibition party. Later, when I became editor, it had a Christian socialist slant. It attained a paid subscription of 18,000. It was now sixteen pages, eleven by sixteen, the same size as *The Home Defender*. Both publications usually carried an amateur journalism department. ...

I returned to the ranch expecting to take up ranching in earnest, as I loved Idaho, and it was my hope

that it be my permanent home; but with the rabbits eating up the alfalfa and spuds, even when I did succeed in raising alfalfa (and I did raise one hundred and twenty tons one year), I soon realized that there was no profit in farming, even though I enjoyed it; so I moved into Seattle in the fall of 1916.

I met Roy Erford, whom I had first seen in 1915 when on a circle trip from Chicago to the two Pacific Coast fairs at San Francisco and San Diego. I joined the local A. J. club, and also became active in the socialist party. Later I established the *Seattle Daily Call*, a socialist daily... It survived for a year. This was my first connection with a liberal, or what most folks would call a radical paper. Today Socialists are considered somewhat conservative. They are sincere and mean well, at least.

My next publication, certainly was not radical. It was an amateur paper and I called it *Chips*. The first issue printed in Seattle in April of 1927. It carried that name and was strictly amateur until December 1928, when the name was changed to *Sports and Hobbies*. By April 1931, we had 8,000 subscribers and well on the way to success. ... *Sports and Hobbies* usually carried a full page on Amateur Journalism, conducted by Clyde F. Noel. ...

So I sold *All Outdoors* to a magazine subscription agency who ran it for six issues and decamped, leaving the files, subscription lists, etc., for me to pick up. Meantime, I had already re-established *Welcome News*, the first issue dated April 1935. I just took the mailing list and the furniture used by *All Outdoors* and moved it into my office. *Welcome News* was again first issued as an amateur publication, with no intention at the time of making it a regular magazine. But the ferment of the radical forces and the epic campaign seemed to offer a good field for an educational magazine with a socialist slant, but not labeled as such.

Walter Pannell, an amateur journalist as well as a professional, who had edited socialist publications in Oklahoma when the socialist movement was strong in that state, joined with me and became editor-in-chief.

Welcome News grew to a paid list of almost 15,000. It lasted from April 1935 to August 1949, when again I sold it to a local group who did not like the name, so they called it *The Humanist World*. Neither Mr. Pannell nor Miss Ericson or myself have any connection with the new policy nor the present publication. Miss Ericson joined the staff of *Welcome News* and conducted the Pen Pals Page, from January 1938 to August 1949. She had written for the old *Welcome News* in Chicago in 1906. We three, Walter Pannell, Edith M. Ericson, and myself, now publish *Chips*, as an amateur magazine. The first issue was January 1950.

We get along with folks who don't agree with us, for we don't think we have all the answers. ♦

Excerpts from Chips

by Dave Tribby

AFTER READING about Thor Mauritzen, I checked my amateur journal collection for his publications. I found four issues of *Chips* ("Hew to the Line, Let the Chips Fall Where They May"): volume 3, numbers 1 (June 1942) and 2 (December 1942); vol. 4 no. 1 (June 1943); and vol. 5, no. 1 (April 1944).

The June 1942 issue reports, "I note that the last issue of *Chips* which I edited as an Amateur publication was dated November 1928—almost 14 years ago." He revived the title, "... to pay tribute to Amateur Journalism as a hobby that becomes so deep-seated that as the old saying goes, 'Once an Amateur, Always an Amateur,' seems to be true, for even tho one enters the professional field, Amateur Journalism still holds your allegiance, for it is the one field of journalism where you can write as you please."

The revival issue, with contributing editors Edith M. Ericson and Walter Pannell, included articles by Mauritzen and Ericson about their amateur journalism activities going back over forty years. Another piece dabbled in United APA politics, proposing a "good will ticket" of candidates:

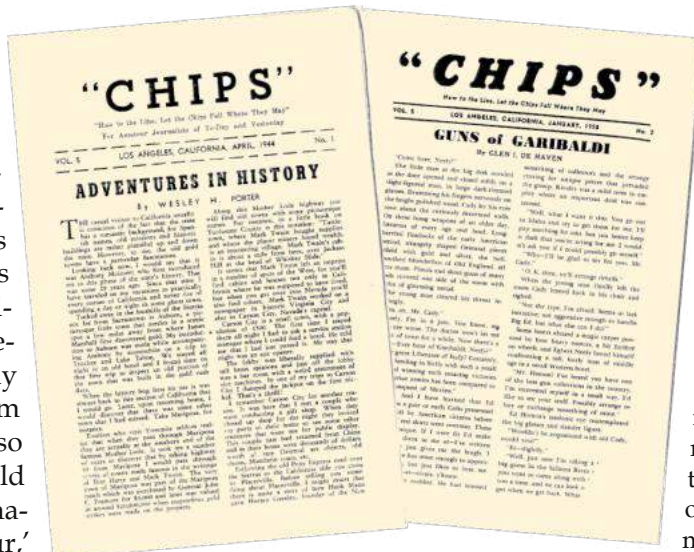
Personally I have only the friendliest of feelings toward Erford and Noel. They are swell fellows to meet in a social way, and I would even grant that they are sincere in their fanatical zeal for what they think is the good of the organization.

They have controlled it ever since 1912, when the split at La Grande, Oregon, gave us two United Amateur Press Assns. ...

Erford and Noel had always reserved unto themselves the right to pass judgment on all who wished to join but they still insist that it is a democratic organization. My own election as President was supported by Erford and Noel in the belief that I would do as I was told but when I asserted my independence, they did all possible to see that no co-operation was given my administration. ...

Mauritzen also supported the formation of a United Alumni Association for the many former members who wanted to maintain a connection with each other.

In the next issue (December 1942) he reported a warm response from many readers, but also noted the expected harsh retort from UAPA leaders:



Two issues of *Chips* are in the Library of Congress collection: April 1944 and January 1950.

Friendly rivalry in sport and play and being a good loser are considered good sportsmanship, but in our junior world of letters, which we call amateur journalism or the 'dom, we find continual strife and recrimination, calling of names, and harsh judgment—at least on the part of certain groups. ...

I feel sure that many present members and former members who have an attachment and a feeling of loyalty for the old United, will welcome this opportunity to unite with us in making this an organization where good fellowship abounds, where old rivalry and scraps will be forgotten, and where the hand

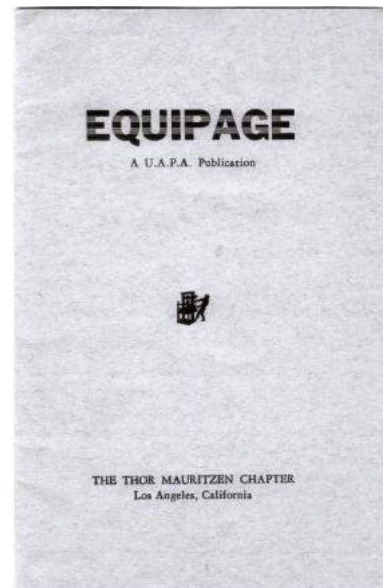
of friendship will be held out to friends and old enemies alike. ...

The charge of traitor is hurled about as soon as any group dares to criticize the slate put up by our ruling faction; and when the campaign is over, the rebels who have dared to challenge the self-selected leaders are ousted, or abused so violently that they quit in disgust. ...

The December *United Amateur* announces that the "U.A.P.A. Outlaws Alumni Body—Phoney Association Killed by Decree." Just like that.

I do not know how many issues of *Chips* were published, but the Library of Congress has only two, including one that I lack: vol. 5, no. 2, for January 1950.

Their collection also has an issue of a related title, *Equipage: A U.A.P.A. Publication* / THE THOR MAURITZEN CHAPTER / Los Angeles, California. ♦



The Library of Congress collection includes an issue of *Equipage*,

1941 UAPA Convention

by Dave Tribby

THIS classic amateur journalism photo was published in the July 5, 1941, issue of *The Courier-Journal* (Louisville, Kentucky). It ran on page 9 with the article, "Amateur Press Told Informal Essays On Life Help to Brighten Up Pages of Newspapers / Mrs. Ethridge, Professor Kain Give Pointers." The featured speakers mentioned in the subhead were Willie Snow Ethridge, author of *I'll Sing One Song*, and Richard M. Kain, University of Louisville English professor. The article notes there were fifty amateur journalists at the United Amateur Press Association convention.

The original caption is reprinted under the photo. ♦



Looking over their publications at the United Amateur Press Association are, from left, Miss Anne Warren, Jersey City; Miss Evelyn Kemper, Sparta, Ky.; Thor G. Mauritzen, Los Angeles; L. V. Heljeson, Harrisburg, Ill., and Arthur F. Harrison, Jersey City.

Readers Check In

SINCE WE do not meet in person to catch up with each other, readers of THE FOSSIL (even non-Fossils) are invited to write and share what they've been up to and their plans for the future. Several Fossils were asked to start things off in this issue.

Fossil President Ken Faig, Jr.

I enjoy reading the AAPA and NAPA bundles and hope to continue doing so in 2022. The special "private bundle" Jim Hedges recently sent to NAPA members was a nice treat for the holiday season in 2021.

I did publish an essay in Bill Boys' *One Page Stories* in 2021. I am somewhat conflicted about publishing personal views, but perhaps I will make bold to submit another essay in 2022.

I waxed verbose about my old high school in 2021 numbers of THE FOSSIL, but will avoid doing so in 2022. (I have avoided that risk, since my 2022 columns are already written and submitted.) I realize the subject of my high school probably has limited interest for our readers. I hope that fellow Fossils will excuse an old man for his sentimental blubbering in 2021.

I hope Dave Tribby will keep interesting numbers of THE FOSSIL coming our way in 2022. Without Dave's efforts, I think The Fossils would have struck their colors years ago. I don't let our small membership count discourage me. I think THE FOSSIL reaches a good audi-

ence via the internet. But the handsome paper edition numbers produced by Dave are also nice to have. I know that Guy Miller, "Mr. Fossil," had the hope that The Fossils would survive to celebrate their one hundred twenty-fifth anniversary in 2029 and I hope we will fulfill his expectation. I feel I owe some amends to Guy for resigning the editorship of THE FOSSIL back in 2012.

My days of traveling to amateur journalism conventions are likely past, but I have good memories of the ones I did attend. The amateur journalism conference held in Madison, Wisconsin in 2016 to celebrate the advent of the Library of Amateur Journalism Collection to UW-Madison Special Collections is still fresh in my mind. I also remember NAPA conventions in Canton, Ohio and Wilmington, Delaware, as well as an AAPA convention in Cleveland, Ohio. My experiences and friends made in the hobby will always be bright spots among my memories.

I am proud of the small role I played in getting the Library of Amateur Journalism Collection to UW-Madison Special Collections. Of course, it was a small role compared with the work of Edwin Hadley Smith (who first assembled the collection), Mike Horvat (who cared for it for so many years), and others. I gave my own amateur journalism collection to University of Iowa Special Collections in Iowa City where it is

known as the William H. Groveman Memorial Collection. It consists mostly of material given to me by Bill Groveman and Stan Oliner.

I wish all my fellow Fossils and their loved ones good health and happiness in 2022. I think amateur journalism is a good hobby for pandemic times. I hope the pandemic will wane in 2022, but think the amateur journalism hobby will remain a worthwhile pursuit in good times and bad.



Fossil Dave Goudsward

The one advantage to living in a Covid hotspot like Florida is that you really have no choice but to get some work done. However, in good faith, I cannot recommend attempting to do long-distance research in the middle of a pandemic. Public libraries and archives have an annoying tendency toward self-preservation and remaining closed when I need them most.

As a result, 2021 was ridiculously unproductive for someone who hasn't worn pants in 16 months. My most notable publication for the year was the decided AJ-centric *Old World Footprints*, a reprint of the Lovecraft edited, W. Paul Cook printed travelogue of Frank Belknap Long's aunt Cassie Symmes. Add a brief TV appearance on the Discovery network show *The Fright Club*, two humorous horror stories, and two mysteries appearing in anthologies under pen names, two articles on pulpster Henry Whitehead in *Pulp Adventures* magazine, and my scant three pieces in THE FOSSIL, and you can see it was not a big year, bibliographically speaking.

The solace to my ego is that I typically underperform when book projects are wrapping up since they tend to suck up most of the writing time with no immediate byline gratification. And in a perfect world, I have four new books in the pipeline that should (could) come out this year. The long-anticipated (according to the publisher) and embarrassingly late (according to the author) *Adventurous Liberation: H. P. Lovecraft in Florida* has finally gone to the editor for final review. The book should be out in late spring.

Adventurous Liberation has opened several avenues of future research unrelated to the book. Naturally, my frugal Yankee roots demand I use these tangents, which will probably show up (sooner or later) in THE FOSSIL. These topics range from *Weird Tales* editor Farnsworth Wright's time in the UAPA to where did Edith Miniter keep her mother's cremains for the 15 years before Miniter died and former NAPA president and Fossil Edward Cole and Lovecraft brought the ashes back to Wilbraham, Mass., for scattering. You know, pressing topics of widespread interest.

My other projects that have been log-jammed be-

cause of Lovecraft should also be out this year: *Coves, Capes, and Cryptids*, my historical overview of New England sea serpents, *Horror Guide to Southern New England* (book four in the series), and a revised/expanded edition of *Ancient Stone Sites of New England*. Two of these are almost 100% guaranteed to be Lovecraft-free.

Who knows, maybe 2022 is the year I consider looking for a pair of pants. I know the neighbors would appreciate it...



Fossil Bill Boys

I'm keeping up with amateur journalism, which fortunately is a fine activity at any time, but ideal as a pandemic-induced pastime. My primary journal right now is *One-Page Stories*, an almost-monthly booklet of eight pages plus covers. Each page is a separate story, some written by myself, but most written by others, some ajayers, some not. Copies in PDF format are freely available at

<http://amateurpress.org/the-monthly-bundles>

Occasionally my in-house journal *Curvatus in Se* makes an appearance in the bundle, as well as *Postcards to John Winslow Snyder*. That last is addressed to one of the most venerable of Fossils, the first president of NAPA (1876), but it, too, is a kind of in-house mini-journal dressed up as faux postcards, with make-believe stamps and fake postmarks.

I've been trying to handle the levers of power as Secretary-Treasurer of the National Amateur Press Association since 2003, and am optimistic that, given enough time, I'll get the hang of it. The latest wrinkle — excellently reported by Fossil Editor D. T. — has been corresponding with an attorney in Pennsylvania whom Wells Fargo Bank has employed to petition the Pennsylvania Attorney General to give them the okay to liquidate the Trust Fund allocation that Alma L. Weixelbaum bestowed upon NAPA fifty years ago. That's been nine months in the legal works. Meanwhile the quarterly distribution checks are still coming, so I'm not sure whether that means the bank's request was turned down, or that it's still floating its way through the Attorney General's staff-work. I'm afraid to initiate an inquiry, in case that might provoke action if it's still lying in someone's in-box.

Ruth and I are blessed to be living in and enjoying German Village, a large historic neighborhood (240 acres) in Columbus, Ohio. And a non-profit group called Village Connections exists here for the specific purpose of helping folks like us age in place, providing socializing opportunities, help as needed with transportation, minor home repairs, a monthly special home-made meal delivered to the door, volunteers who

call and check in from time to time, do leaf-raking, shoveling sidewalks, and keeping our emergency contact list on file in case of, well, an emergency. Even the City of Columbus Department of Fire provides a free, secure front-door key box that only a fireman or first-responder can open, in case of an emergency where we couldn't get to the door ourselves.

Aside from that these past two years, walking our dog twice daily and occasionally attending upon medical professionals, makes up the rowdier activities of days flowing peacefully, repetitively along, masks hanging on the doorknob.



Fossil Editor Dave Tribby

A year ago, my county was on strict Covid protocols. Shopping in stores was allowed (if masked), but not indoor gatherings such as church services. Anyone arriving from more than 100 miles away had to quarantine for ten days. Liz and I saw almost nobody except on Zoom calls.

Once vaccinations became generally available (we got our shots in February and March of 2021) things opened up. We went out to dinner for the first time in twelve months at the end of March and realized how much better food tastes compared to warmed-up delivery. Our church hosted in-person outdoor worship (in addition to online) in June, and it was great to actually see friends face to face.

We made a quick trip to Oregon in June to visit friends and see a play, and a two-night trip to Monterey for a friend's wedding. We particularly valued 2021's Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations with family, since we were by ourselves in 2020. In January 2022 we cross-country skied for two days in the Lake Tahoe area for the first time since 2019.

After sixteen years of retirement, I seem to have plenty to keep me busy. Amateur journalism activities include editing *THE FOSSIL*, publishing *Tribby Tribune*, *Handset Journal*, and *Ink Cahoots*, and being webmaster for The Fossils and AAPA. In the realm of letterpress printing there are printing projects at my Handset Press and I am a member of the San Jose Printers' Guild. At church, I'm on the finance committee and sing in the choir.

For the past fifteen years I have been working on a genealogy project to document the descendants of my three-times great-grandparents Jason Tribby and Sara Tarvin for a book to be published by the Tarvin Family Association. The basic research has finally been completed, and I have identified 3,761 descendants and their 2,730 spouses. Their biographies of 495,567 words fill 1,340 pages. I'm currently working with distant cousins to add family pictures to the book.



Fossil Jim Hedges

What have I been up to? Well, you haven't noticed much activity here, have you? I haven't had ink on the press for over a year, because a pinched nerve is making it painful to stand on my feet.

But the bench is still covered with projects. I recently set up my Kelsey, a 6 by 10, and maybe I can contrive to sit on a stool and push the handle... I also have a Kluge and a Little Giant, but I've become too tottery to safely use a power press.

Another obstacle is that my basement and an out-building are full of stuff. The press room is at one end and the case room is at the other end, and the out-building is the paper room. Even if I were to print with the Kelsey, there would still be a lot of walking around and carrying things.

It's interesting that Ken Faig was able to donate material to the University of Iowa. I'm an Iowa graduate (1960) and was in their Friends of the Library for a while when I was just starting printing. My father's last job was as an archivist there, and he knew the head librarian from church. The librarian asked me to send him things, and I did, but I assumed he was just being nice to Dad, and after he retired, and Dad retired, I stopped. Didn't realize Iowa had a serious interest in a-jay/handcraft printing.

Not printing has freed up time for other things: I have a political history website, begun nearly 25 years ago, which is one of those projects which expands to fill the time available to it. I'm also writing music—military marches which I sketched out years, decades, ago but never finished. And people in all of my many hobbies keep bugging me to write things...

The Fossils, a handful of people guided by a few dedicated souls, has a parallel in the American Spelean History Association. ASHA, too, has a few dozen members guided by a core of die-hards, and it, too, has a tiny but carefully written journal. Both groups occupy solid niches in their respective specialties. We may be small, but we're essential. Someone will always pick up the reins (I hope!).



Robin Rider, Curator of Special Collections, Memorial Library, University of Wisconsin-Madison (written December 31, 2021, to The Fossils, AAPA, and NAPA)

As we come to the end of a busy and challenging year, in which we served research and teaching needs both online and in person, I write to express my thanks to you all. We greatly appreciate your continued gen-

erosity to the Leland M. Hawes, Jr. Fund for the Library of Amateur Journalism; and we are always happy to see the bundles and publications sent to Special Collections by your organizations. We are so grateful to you and all of the supporters of the LAJ Collection for your dedication and enthusiasm.

We look forward to spring semester, when student employees in Special Collections will return to the task of physically organizing the loose AJ issues in the collection, which will in turn make feasible the creation of what I'm calling a master spreadsheet of those thousands of issues. We'll be sure to keep you apprised of

our progress.

In the meantime, I hope you and your families are staying well, and I extend best wishes for 2022 on behalf of all of us in the Department of Special Collections.



Anyone reading this is encouraged to write to Editor Tribby (contact information in the masthead on page 12) to share what you have been up to, what you are looking forward to, or anything else that is on your mind. ♦

Official Editor's Message

Another Academic Studies Amateur Journalism

by Dave Tribby

IN LAST April's issue, Fossils President Ken Faig, Jr. discussed two PhD theses that focused on nineteenth century amateur journalism. I recently found a new related paper while searching Academia.edu: "Terrains of Media Work: Producing Amateurs and Professionals in the 19th-Century United States" was accepted for publication in *Media History*, November 2021. You can find it by searching the title online, or use this link:

<https://tinyurl.com/TerrainsOfMediaWork>

The author, Dr. James F. ("Jay") Hamilton, is a professor and department head for Entertainment & Media Studies in Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Georgia. His speciality is researching the history, theory, and practice of alternative media. Amateur journalism of the 1870s and 1880s attracted his attention as a way of understanding contemporary conflicts between the professional press and amateur citizen journalists.

He explores the subject by using competing viewpoints of nineteenth century social change discussed in Raymond Williams' book *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, first published by Columbia University Press in 1958. **Industrialism** promotes social changes needed for industrial capitalism, while **Romanticism** advocates for human needs. These are each paired with the political positions **conservative** and **progressive**, yielding four general positions:

Industrial conservatives expect economic natural selection to place power and wealth in the hands of a narrow elite. They view amateurs as naïve, with lower skills than professionals.

Industrial progressives look for wider involvement and value meritocracy over tradition and heritage. They see amateurs as honing their skills to reach the

level of professionals, who prove their worth by market success.

Romantic conservatives see a small group of true artists leading the fight against turning art into a commodity. Amateurs defend traditional values while professionals only seek profit.

Romantic progressives advocate for greater participation, with artists serving society rather than leading. Amateurs are selfless contributors while professionals are skilled practitioners.

Dr. Hamilton notes the rise of amateur journalism in the decades following the U. S. Civil War was tied to other vast changes in society. Print media was undergoing consolidation as, for example, syndicates began selling content to publications. Local newspapers no longer needed to cultivate local free-lance and amateur writers. At the same time, new niche media emerged, such as juvenile literature. Adolescents drawn to children's books and magazines saw themselves as a community. When small printing presses became available, these (mostly) boys could express themselves in print, giving birth to amateur journalism. During the same time, growth in the literary marketplace created a professional benchmark for measuring amateur success.

At the start of the amateur journalism movement, many of the practitioners wrote descriptions on how to get started and shared lists of resources as a way to attract recruits. Most U. S. amateurs had a touch of professionalism because they made money by selling advertising and subscriptions. In contrast, English amateurs were more likely to circulate non-commercial "pass-round" magazines.

The article explores books of the era written by E. Howard Hutchinson and Alfred S. Porter (*The Ama-*

teur's Guide for 1870), George M. Huss (*A History of Amateur Journalism*, 1877), and Thomas G. Harrison (*The Career and Reminiscences of an Amateur Journalist, and a History of Amateur Journalism*, 1883). He notes Romantic progressive themes when the authors describe their motivation arising from a "mania for editorship" rather than a hope for profit. But an Industrial progressive perspective is also present when they describe striving for commercial success.

Dr. Hamilton sees even more contradiction in Harrison's book, between conservative Romantic and progressive Industrial perspectives. Those amateurs who maintained literary standards were commended and those who sought profit by writing for an increasingly crass mass market were denigrated, yet amateur journalism was seen as only a temporary step on a path toward becoming a professional writer.

Amateurism is saluted as a principled defense and preservation of a valued but disappearing tradition. Professionalism is resigned to as a necessary capitulation to the demands of the market over the wishes of one's heart, but at the same time aspired to as a goal for anyone who gains a level of technical skill high enough to be paid for it. ...

The contradiction between these two positions is hard to overstate. On one hand, Harrison celebrates an increasingly archaic amateur journalism for its communal education and fraternity, with values placed on quality of reputation, friendships, and writing skill rather than money earned. But, on the other hand, he values amateur journalism primarily as a means of building skills in order to get a job, and thus a stage to complete rather than a life to live or a tradition to defend. ...

[A]mateur journalism of the 1880s is indeed a contradiction, but due to being a point of impending bifurcation. Its two contradictory positions form a fork in the road. In one direction is a dominant valorization of amateurism that works through a conservative Romantic critique, in which amateurs are virtual opposites of professionals by being celebrated for their preservation of age-old handicrafts in a fraternity of the like-minded, with professionals denigrated as commercial hacks and market sell-outs. In the other direction is a dominant valorization of professionalism that works through a progressive Industrialism, in which amateurship works closely but subserviently with professionalism by being a form of apprenticeship with the ulterior aim of achieving success by becoming a paid commercial writer.

The article concludes by tying this 1880s

contradiction to the contemporary conflict between professional and citizen journalists: the priorities of the market vs. a creative reformation of media work.

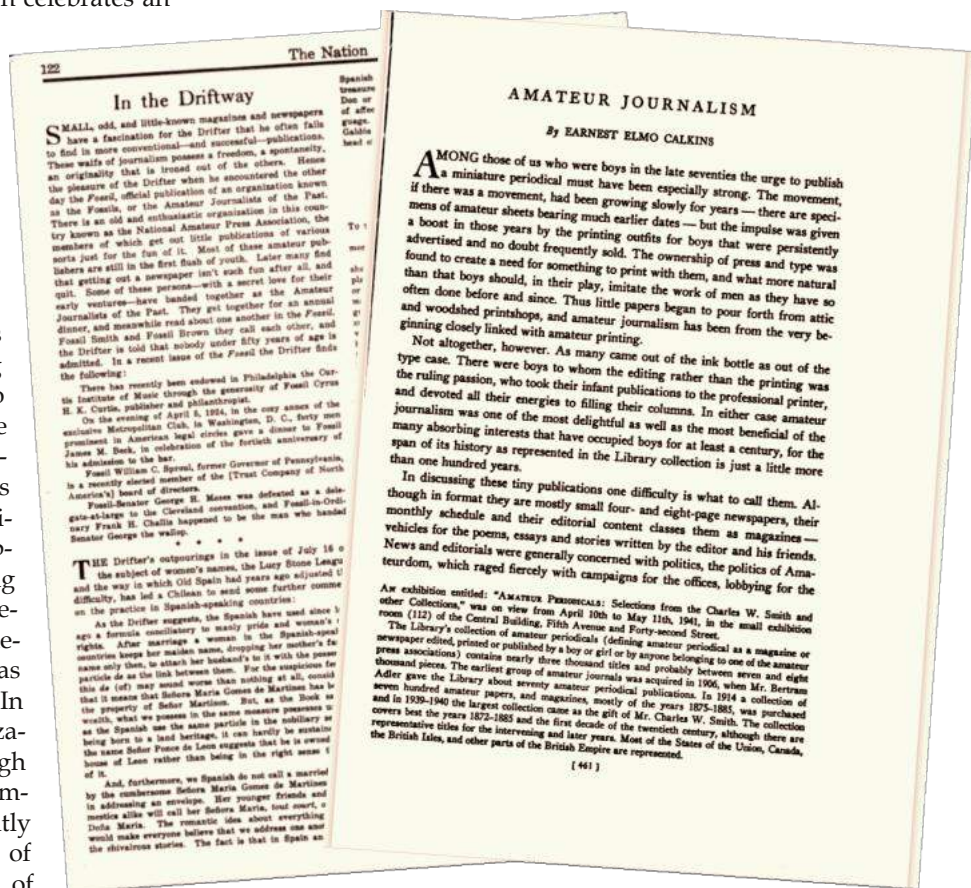
My personal observation of twentieth century amateur journalists told a different story. Professional writers like Lee Hawes, Dean Rea, and Ted Conover started publishing amateur papers in their youth, and their love of writing led them into successful newspaper careers. Yet they maintained their ties to the hobby, getting a kick out of writing what they wanted in their own style. When they started in the hobby in the early 1940s, amateur journalism had evolved significantly from its beginnings, with teenagers no longer expected to leave once they reached adulthood..



Amateur Journalism References

Dr. Hamilton's paper included a 3½ page Reference section including citations both familiar (e.g., The Fossils' website) and unfamiliar to me.

In the latter category was Earnest Elmo Calkins' seven page article "Amateur Journalism" in the June 1941 *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* (p. 461). The author puts his own brief involvement with amateur-



Two references about Amateur Journalism found online: *The Nation*, July 30, 1924 (left) and *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, June 1941.

dom in the 1880s into the broader context of the early amateur journalism movement of the 1870s and the formation of the National Amateur Press Association. Our own organization is mentioned at the end:

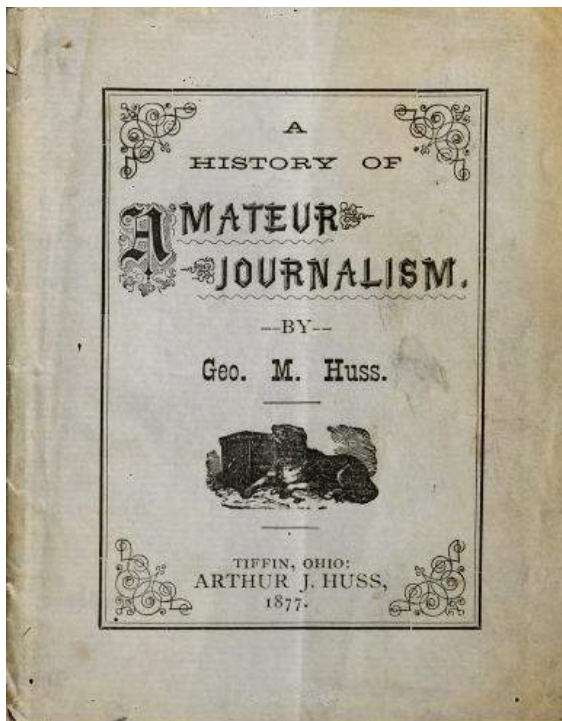
During the past twenty-five years considerable effort has been made to keep alive the memory of a common experience by means of a loosely organized society known as "The Fossils," an alumni association of former amateur editors. For some years an annual banquet was held but despite the enthusiasm of a few members that amiable function has lapsed, and we are left to cherish our memories as best we can without artificial aid.

An opening footnote reports the exhibition "Amateur Periodicals: Selections from the Charles W. Smith and other Collections" had been on display at NYPL in April and May. Volume five of the *Bulletin* is available online at

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015035112401> and the article is on page 485 of the PDF file.

A second reference that was new to me was an "In the Driftway" column from *The Nation* for July 30, 1924 (p. 122). Here are some excerpts:

Small, odd, and little-known magazines and newspapers have a fascination for the Drifter ... Hence the pleasure of the Drifter when he encountered the other day the *Fossil*, official publication of an organization known as the Fossils... There is an old and enthusiastic



Another reference is George Huss's *A History of Amateur Journalism*, which mainly covers the years 1870 to 1876.

organization in this country known as the National Amateur Press Association, the members of which get out little publications of various sorts just for the fun of it. ... Later, many find that getting out a newspaper isn't such fun after all, and quit. Some of these persons — with a secret love for their early ventures — have banded together as the Amateur Journalists of the Past. They get together for an annual dinner, and meanwhile read about one another in the *Fossil*.

This brief article can be found in Google Books:

https://www.google.com/books/edition/_/WeWuhCpFGQEC

A third reference that I found online was George M. Huss's *A History of Amateur Journalism*, a 28 page booklet printed in 1877. The text was originally published in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* (with the byline George James) on June 12, 1876 — less than a month before the formation of the National Amateur Press Association. The author describes a few amateur papers published in 1812, 1829, and 1858, then notes the invention of cheap printing presses in 1868 triggered a "mania for editing [that] fairly seized Young America in 1870." He describes in detail amateur writers, publications, and organizations of 1870-76.

Links to all of these references have been added to the "History" section on The Fossils' website.



O'Connor's New Email Address

Mike O'Connor, former AAPA president, editor, and just about everything else, likes to keep up with his ajay friends by reading THE FOSSIL online. He recently wrote, "Something happened earlier this year and I couldn't use my email address. Had to get a new one...and you can imagine the problems that caused." If you would like to reconnect with Mike, let me know.



UW Receives NAPA E-Journals

In last April's issue, THE FOSSIL reported the University of Wisconsin had added 372 issues of AAPA e-journals to its Digital Library, found at

<https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/AAmateurJournals>

In December a Memo of Understanding between UW Digital Collections and NAPA was signed, and soon afterward an archive of an additional 19 PDF files from NAPA was submitted to the digital project. UWDC project lead Jesse Henderson is not sure when the new batch of e-journals will be processed: "I'm putting it into our queue, but we're moving through things slowly at this point, and have other projects ahead of it." ♦

Webmaster Report

by Dave Tribby

THE FOSSILS' website had a total of 16,895 visitors during 2021, or an average of 46 per day (not counting the "robots" and "spiders" that continuously search Web content).

Several times during the year, the number of daily visitors rose to over 120 (once, as high as 250). An examination of Web traffic logs reveals the source for several of those spikes:

- As I reported in the July issue of THE FOSSIL, several H. P. Lovecraft-related discussion groups referenced Dave Goudsward's article "Lovecraft and Loincloths" from the April issue. The number of website visitors peaked at 120 on April 23.
- In June, the article "The Fedcoin experiment" on the "Gray Mirror" Substack blog referenced Truman Spencer's *History of Amateur Journalism* (in the website's "History" section) to show that "contrary to the pride of all bloggers" amateur journalism has been a phenomenon for over a century. The peak single-day traffic in June was 130, and 663 visitors overall accessed the page.
- A November article on Vice News, "America's Only LGBTQ Historic District Is Falling Apart," documented the "literary journal spat" between Elsa Gidlow and H. P. Lovecraft by referencing Ken Faig's article "Lavender Ajays of the Red-Scare Period: 1917-1920" in THE FOSSIL no. 329 for July 2006. The website recorded 250 visitors on Nov. 12, 90 on Nov. 13, 85 on Nov. 14, and 111 on Nov. 15. A total of 787 visitors downloaded that issue.

Issues of THE FOSSIL on the website continue to attract more readers than the print edition. The number of visitors accessing 2021 issues:

January 2021	88
April 2021	189
July 2021	107
October 2021	144

Several earlier issues had more than 150 visitor downloads during the year: July 2006 (787), July 2009 (223), April 2012 (192), October 2017 (190), and July 2005 (169).

The website currently uses 57.2 megabytes of disk storage out of a limit of 100 MB. PDF files holding issues 322 through 389 of THE FOSSIL take up 42.9 MB.

There were only a few changes to the website last year, mainly to fix links to web pages that had moved (such as history links to NAPA's redesigned site or links to collections at several libraries). ♦

Time to Renew?

*Many Fossil memberships
come due in January.*

*Please check the expiration
date on your mailing label.*

*If you are due soon,
send your renewal to
Secretary-Treasurer Tom Parson.*

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

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