

The Fossil

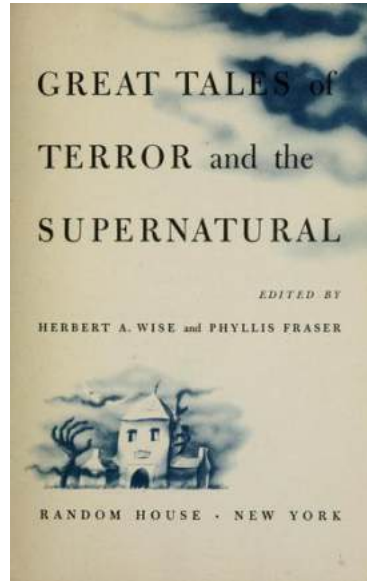
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The EOD and I

by Ken Faig, Jr.

I FIRST discovered the work of H. P. Lovecraft in *Great Tales of Terror and the Supernatural* (Random House, 1944), edited by Herbert A. Wise and Phyllis Fraser. The last two items in this anthology were Lovecraft's stories "The Rats in the Walls" and "The Dunwich Horror." Both stories were credited to Arkham House in the Acknowledgments. I am not sure whether my book is a first edition; it does state "THIS IS A WARTIME BOOK" on the copyright page. It was originally a Christmas gift to my parents from my maternal grandmother. It still contains her gift card (clipped to the flyleaf), reading "A Merry Xmas/ From/Mother Kennedy." I found the book in the living room closet of our home in Cincinnati, Ohio about 1962. I don't know that my parents ever read any of the content, but I sure did. Many Lovecraft books have subsequently come into and left my possession, but this one I have kept and I have it before me as I write. I like to think that my Irish grandmother Margaret Veronica (Higgins) Kennedy (1882-1952) liked ghostly tales, but I have no proof other than her selection of this volume. She and I actually crossed over for four years (I was born in 1948). There are snapshots depicting me with her, but I have to admit I have no active recollection of her. To explain the beginning of my fascination with H. P. Lovecraft, I credit "Mother Kennedy."

I soon found books by Lovecraft in the public library since Arkham House was reprinting his fiction in three volumes in 1963-65. It wasn't too long before I was ordering Arkham House books from booksellers. My orders placed through the Shillito's Book De-



Ken Faig was first exposed to H. P. Lovecraft in the anthology *Great Tales of Terror and the Supernatural*

partment took months to arrive because they used a jobber. But orders placed through bookseller John G. Kidd & Son arrived very promptly. A sticker on the inside flap of the book from "Mother Kennedy" shows that it was purchased at that very bookseller, whose store I remember well. I had no checking account of my own, but before long my mother was helping me order books directly from Arkham House. Their service was amazingly fast. Books usually arrived in my mailbox in Cincinnati within a week of placing my order. I spent the rest of my high school years gradually reading my way through the Arkham House backlist. Sometimes the books even came signed—I still remember how thrilled I was to get signed copies of Derleth's books *The Mask of Cthulhu* and *The Trail of Cthulhu*. While I no longer

have most of my Arkham House titles, I still have these two. (Of books by Lovecraft himself, I have kept *Selected Letters*, *Collected Poems* (signed by Frank Utpatel) and *Dreams and Fancies*.) I couldn't afford many out-of-print titles. Most of what I did buy I got from Stephen Takacs or Gerry de la Ree. Later on, I did eventually own the first two Arkham House Lovecraft books, *The Outsider and Others* (1939) and *Beyond the Wall of Sleep* (1943). I think I paid \$125 and \$100, respectively, at the Athenaeum Bookshop on Central Street in Evanston, Illinois, in the early 1980s. I owned these two books for thirty years, but eventually they went the way of all good things during my big book dispersal in 2014-15. My most egregious antiquarian purchase was *The Shadow Over Innsmouth* (William L. Crawford, 1936) which I purchased at a book fair for \$800. It was jacketless but I eventually bought a reproduction dust jacket for it. At this writing, it is still on my shelves.

I was hooked on Lovecraft, but my high school teachers showed no enthusiasm for my feeble efforts to imitate the stories of my favorite author. So I mostly kept my enthusiasm to myself. August Derleth of Arkham House was sparing in his mentions of Lovecraft fandom, but in one issue of *The Arkham Collector* he did mention George Record's organization the Dark Brotherhood, named for August Derleth's story first published as a "posthumous collaboration" with H. P. Lovecraft in *The Dark Brotherhood and Other Pieces* (Arkham House, 1966). The first articles I ever published on Lovecraft appeared in *The Dark Brotherhood Journal* ca. 1973. I think one article concerned Lovecraft's appearances in the Hope High School yearbooks ca. 1904-07. Another concerned musical adaptations of his work.



The new Arkham House warehouse.

A NEAR CATASTROPHE: In the previous issue we pointed out that the building of our new warehouse above would put a strain on our working capital. Since then, a far more important event has taken place which will profoundly affect the Arkham House program: five (or six) years or more, though we hope to be able to announce a firm schedule in

Copyright 1969, by August Derleth.

August Derleth edited ten issues of The Arkham Collector from 1967 to 1971.

I don't recommend spending any time looking for these items. In 1970-72 I was at Brown University as a math grad student. I was an abject failure at graduate-level mathematics but I did spend some time with the Lovecraft Collection in the John Hay Library.

About 1972 Texans Joe Pumilia and Bill Wallace proposed

a Lovecraft-focused amateur press association (apa). I think Wallace visited me during my time at Brown. The first mailing of the newly-founded Esoteric Order of Dagon apa appeared in early 1973 under the official editorship of Roger Bryant. I was in the first mailing with my *Moshassuck Review*, named for the Providence River tributary which joins the Woonasquatucket in downtown Providence. The EOD itself is named for the sect featured in Lovecraft's story "The Shadow Over Innsmouth." The official organ (OO) was named *The Cry of the Cricket* from early on. The mailings were at first bi-monthly, but before too long they changed to quarterly, a frequency which the apa has maintained up to the present day. I was a charter member, but was out for about six months ca. 1974 and again in 2014-18 (when I convinced myself I was "retired" from Lovecraft fan activity). Increasingly fragile health and diminished energy led me to submit my resignation a second time with the Candlemas 2026 mailing (the quarterly mailing times are labelled Candlemas, Mayeve, Lammas and Hal-lowmas). Altogether, I think I spent a little less than fifty years in the EOD. I rarely missed a mailing. Over the years I must have contributed 1500 pages or more.

The EOD is an activity-required apa but the minimum activity is a modest six pages every six months. It remains a paper-based apa, unlike the Robert E. Howard apa (REHUPA) which has converted to electronic form. The annual dues to support distribution of the mailings are currently \$45 for U.S. residents, \$50 for Canadians, and \$60 for

everyone else. Despite the cost, I think a paper format helps keep apa material within the circle of the members. The roster as of Candlemas 2026 listed twenty-six members (counting joint members Don and Mollie Burleson as one). Traditionally, Lovecraft fandom has been a male-dominated field, but as of Candlemas 2026 the EOD had three female members: Mollie Burleson, Cecelia Hopkins-Drewer and Katherine Kerestman. At age 93, Mollie Burleson is surely the "dean" of our female members. She and her husband Don (a mere 84) publish *The Morgan and Rice Gazette*. Outside the U.S., the EOD has members in Sweden (Martin Andersson), Australia (Leigh Blackmore) and Italy (Pietro Guarriello and Adriano Monti-Buzzetti). No members from Kadath, R'lyeh or Leng—as yet.

I am at a disadvantage in writing about the EOD since I donated all my mailings 1973-2014 to the University of Iowa Special Collections (William H. Groveman Memorial Collection) in Iowa City. (The file is not missing the 1974 mailings, when I was out for six months or so, because OE Roger Bryant, believing I would be back, saved those mailings for me.) This collection also includes all the "mainstream" amateur journals from the likes of NAPA, UAPA, AAPA, etc., that I received from Bill Groveman, Stan Oliner and others. To these materials, I added some Lovecraft material of my own, including a bound volume of Francis Towner Laney's *The Acolyte*. I still have my 2018-26 mailings, but otherwise I am writing mostly from memory. Roger Bryant (1973-77) was followed as OE by Joe Moudry (1977-80), Bernadette Bosky (1980), Mollie Werba (1980-87) and S. T. Joshi (1987-present). Bernadette Bosky (b. 1957) was later the spouse of Arthur D. Hlavaty (1942-2025) and Mollie Werba of Donald Burleson. I am grateful to Fossil editor David Tribby and Google's AI assistant for the chronology of the EOD OEs.

The EOD apa does not sponsor any conventions per se. But many Acolytes (EOD lingo for members) were present for the MinnCons sponsored by Jack Koblas and the MadCons sponsored by Randy Everts in the late 1970s and early 1980s. I don't have too many memories of those always lively affairs. Meeting

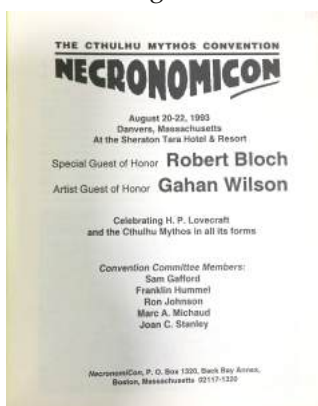
George Townsend Wetzel (1921-1983), an early Lovecraft researcher, at one of the MadCons was a memorable event for me. I remember dozens of fans crowded into Jack Koblas's Minneapolis home. His attractive young wife was a perfect hostess, but looking into her eyes I could read the thought: "Husband, why are all these strangers in our home? I want to share it with you and our children." Jack and his wife eventually divorced. I saw him last when he was guest of honor at the 2011 Walden West Festival sponsored by the August Derleth Society. I remember that Jack and I both ordered a probably not-very-healthy but still scrumptious country fried steak in the Derleth Room at Leystra's in Sauk City. One other restaurant themed anecdote: Randy Everts loved to tell how Derleth ordered two steaks for himself when he took Randy to Ponderosa for dinner during a Sauk City visit. Randy had just one entrée when my parents took him and me to Ponderosa in Joliet, Illinois, when he visited me there ca. 1972. But he did eat a good helping of Pepperidge Farm coconut cake at our home. Randy impressed both of my parents favorably; I could see how he did well on his trips across the country interviewing former Lovecraft associates. My sister Susan was less impressed; she accused my visitor and me of staying up all night to talk about HPL, his friends, and relatives. I also attended NESFA's Boskone in Boston in 1971, and the Chicago World Fantasy conventions in Chicago in 1983 and 1996. I had helped L. Sprague de Camp with his 1975 biography of Lovecraft, and I think he encouraged me to attend Boskone. At the 1983 event, I managed to say hello to Walden Derleth (son of August) and Robert Harrall (administrator of the Lovecraft estate) in the dealers' room. At the 1996 event, I was on a Lovecraft panel with my friend Bob Weinberg (and others). In the early 1980s, I had attended a monthly science fiction club meeting at Bob's home in Oak Lawn, Illinois. Bob and his wife Phyllis were always great hosts.

Many Lovecraft fans attended the centennial symposium held by Brown University in 1990. A marker celebrating Lovecraft was dedicated on the John Hay Library lawn on his birthday, August 20. The weekend of the symposium



Dedication of Lovecraft plaque, August 20 1990, at John Hay Library Lawn; left to right: Will Murray, Jennifer Lee (Brown University), Jon Cooke, and S. T. Joshi.

was blisteringly hot – weather Lovecraft himself would have liked. Many of us were housed in Brown dorm rooms without air conditioning. When midnight arrived (I don't remember whether it was Friday or Saturday) I knew I wasn't going to get to sleep anytime soon so I joined many other attendees in trooping over to Thayer Street to watch a Lovecraft movie premiere at the air-conditioned Avon Theater. If I could have, I would have stayed there all night. After the NecronomiCon conventions started in 1993, many EOD members attended the biannual event. The first was held in Danvers, Massachusetts, but I believe the rest have been held in Providence. I remember meeting the Burlesons at the first NecronomiCon in 1993. Don is an authority on the 1947 Roswell, New Mexico UFO crash – in fact, he and Mollie live there. I figure that if someone as intelli-



Part of the 1993 NecronomiCon program

studies in the 1970s when he maintained that the good-versus-evil Derlethian theory regarding Lovecraft's stories was false.

I think it was at the 1997 NecronomiCon that Marc Michaud piloted me and Dan Lorraine and a few others out to Foster, Rhode Island to visit the James W. Phillips house where Lovecraft visited in 1896. I'm glad I got to see it, because it subsequently burned to the ground. We also visited the Phillips-Place burial ground and got to see the markers for HPL's great-great-grandparents Asaph and Esther

(Whipple) Phillips. One sad result of the latter visit was that Dan got a terrible case of poison ivy. I didn't go to another NecronomiCon until 2013, when our current Fossils president Dave Goudsward was a great companion. (Dave, Mick Taylor, Michael Brown and I are on the short list of fans who have belonged to both the EOD and The Fossils.) The next big event I attended was the amateur journalism conference held at University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2016. I was on a panel on HPL with S.T. Joshi and David E. Schultz. Despite all his many accomplishments as book designer and editor, Schultz is a very modest fellow and rarely seen at conventions. He did great in Madison in 2016. We had a great closing dinner on the final night of the conference in a

university conference and dining facility overlooking one of Madison's lakes. There was a thunderstorm, which provided great views looking out over the lake. S. T. Joshi, David Schultz, Derrick Hussey, Dwayne Olson and spouses made up a Lovecraft table at the banquet. Rev. William E. Boys of NAPA served as emcee.

When I visited Providence for NecronomiCon in 2013, I made a point of drinking from the fountain at the Athenaeum Library on Benefit Street. The legend goes that drinkers from this fountain will return to Providence. But despite the legend, I think my final visit to Providence was in 2013. The same health concerns and diminished energy that triggered my resignation from the EOD in 2026 will probably forbid any future visits to Providence, except in spirit. One customary special event of the NecronomiCons is the Cthulhu Prayer Breakfast on the closing Sunday. For many years, Robert M. Price was the presiding hierophant for these events. There's singing of Lovecraftian hymns and other such frivolities. For those who scorn frivolities (or the expense of the breakfast registration), there are always competing panels and readings going. Another Lovecraftian convention that I attended in 2011 was MythosCon in Tempe, Arizona. It was nice to see greenery in early January. My wife and children came along and stayed with her sister Barbara, who lives in the area. We did some more traditional vacationing after the convention. I also went to a CthuluCon in Madison, Wisconsin ca. 2006. I remember Bob Price's trying to



S. T. Joshi, Ken Faig, and David E. Schultz at Amateur Journalism Conference 2016.

convince the waitress in the hotel restaurant just how well-done he wanted his burger—certainly, he wanted no greenery (lettuce, tomato, etc.) contaminating its burned-to-a-crisp goodness.

Over the years, I belonged to other apas as well. In the mid-1970s I joined the Fantasy Amateur Press Association (FAPA), founded in 1937 by



Ken belonged to FAPA for about ten years

Donald Wollheim and others. It may have been one of the first of the specialty “subject area” apas. At the time, FAPA (which had a maximum membership of seventy-five) had a substantial waitlist and I think I waited several years to get in. I

learned early on to pay attention to apa rules. FAPA required single-spaced contributions and one of my early contributions (perhaps my first) used 1½-spacing. One of the FAPA veterans warned me in his mailing comments to play by the rules or else. I think I remained in FAPA for about a decade and I tried my best to obey the rules from that point on. I eventually gave my file of FAPA mailings to my friend Doug Anderson. When Randy Everts started the Necronomicon apa as a rival to the EOD in the early 1980s, I joined. I think my Necronomicon apa zine was named *De Tenebris*. In the wake of my joining The Fossils ca. 1995, I also joined NAPA (National Amateur Press Association) and AAPA (American Amateur Press Association). Neither of these two apas has an activity requirement, and while I have enjoyed their mailings, I have remained mostly deadwood (i.e., a non-contributing member). In 2025, I contributed a number of small zines to NAPA using the title *The Mocked Turtle*—a tribute to Lewis Carroll’s character the Mock Turtle. I’ve been even more inactive in AAPA. I can recall submitting a single-sheet tribute to Louise Lincoln in celebration of her one hundredth birthday. She was a retired Latin teacher, and I made bold to write my tribute in Latin. I am sure I made my



Ken has been a member of *The Fossils*, NAPA, and AAPA since the mid-1990s

share of egregious mistakes. Maybe if I am ever inspired to publish an actual zine for AAPA, I will call it *The Mocking Turtle*. When I first published *Moshas-suck Review* for the EOD, I had volume and issue numbers but in recent years mailing identification (e.g., Candlemas 2026) is all I have managed. So bibliographers beware.

I loved Latin the best of all my subjects in high school, but I never went on to study it in college. Sometimes I wonder what my life would have been like had I majored in classics rather than mathematics in college. Perhaps I would have made a passable high school Latin teacher. Or perhaps I would have ended up driving a cab. One difficulty I have with “general subjects” apas is that I generally do not care to write about myself or public events. I can write on *ad infinitum* about my niched Lovecraftian interests. However, ask me about Lovecraft’s racial prejudices or his sexuality, and I clam right up. Maybe that’s conceding victory to the Hatecrafters, but it’s just me. No question my most sustained effort as an ajay has been serving as Fossils historian (ca. 2002-04), then OE (2004-12), and then president (2014-25). I am confident I have left The Fossils in good hands with my successor as president, Dave Goudsward, OE Dave Tribby and board members John Horn and Monica Wasserman. Mike Horvat and I enjoy largely honorific positions as librarian and historian, respectively.

But I am straying from the topic of the EOD itself. Over the years, we had some notable members. J. Vernon Shea, who had been a correspondent of Lovecraft, contributed his hefty and always fascinating *Outré* to the mailings for a number of years. I think I met Vernon, but I don’t remember whether it was at a MinnCon, MadCon or some other gathering. Another highly valued member of the EOD was Ben Indick. He was a big fan of Stephen King but a trufan of HPL. He very generously sponsored the EOD’s Charles Dexter Awards (riffing on Lovecraft’s story “The Case of Charles Dexter Ward”) for a number of years. I won one of these prizes—one of those fat 1930s collections of weird tales from England. I wish I still had that volume. Randy Everts was famous for shouting out that

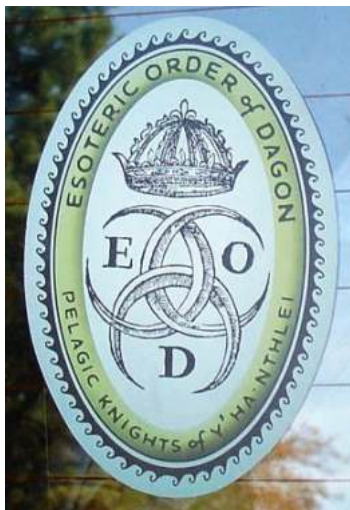
Lovecraftian exclamation “Iä!” in public places (often restaurants). Later Acolyte Steve Walker wrote an entire paper about “Iä!” for the *Lovecraft Annual*.

Turning to the current roster, what can be said of the EOD’s longtime OE, S. T. Joshi? Born in Pune, India in 1958, Joshi came to the United States with his family when he was four years old and settled in Muncie, Indiana. He was already at work on Lovecraft when he was an undergraduate at Brown University. He has published landmark biographical and critical works on HPL and has published Lovecraft’s collected works as editorial director at Derrick Hussey’s Hippocampus Press. His own Sarnath Press has published editions of Ambrose Bierce and H. L. Mencken, among others. The title of his own EODzine uses a Lovecraftian phrase: *What Is Anything?* In a word, the EOD has been very fortunate to have S. T. Joshi as its OE for several decades. Martin Andersson is an expert proofreader for Derrick Hussey’s Hippocampus Press. Derrick himself was a member of the EOD for some years. David Barker had a fascinating series of articles on HPL and photography in his EODzine. He retired from the EOD about the same time as I did. Leigh Blackmore brings his expert knowledge of occult matters to the order. He manages to follow the Lovecraftian scene worldwide from his perch in Australia. Jim Dapkus returned to the EOD after many years of absence. Edward Guimont brings his expert knowledge of astronomy to the order. Katherine Kerestman has an acute critical eye and also writes beautifully crafted fiction of her own. Marcos Legaria amazes everyone with his expert knowledge of Lovecraft’s literary executor Robert H. Barlow. His planned biography of Barlow will be worth waiting for. Fossil Mick Taylor had the audacity to name his EODzine *The New Faig Collector*. I believe he is adopting a new name now that I am retiring from the EOD. Steve Walker is a librarian and brings his expert information science skills to the order. There is always something new and unexpected in his zine.

In the beginning, the EOD was pretty weak when it came to mailing comments. One very gifted fantasy poet quit the order because he felt the mem-

bers were ignoring his contributions. I guess Lovecraftians have a tendency to be self-absorbed; Deborah Niswonger (d. 2025), the original cataloger of the Lovecraft Collection at the John Hay Library, called Lovecraft fandom a self-admiration society. But she also hosted a birthday party for HPL at her Providence home. Brown professor Barton St. Armand also did his share to encourage the cultivation of Lovecraft scholarship at Brown. Now there is even a Lovecraft scholarship at JHL named in honor of OE S. T. Joshi. As for my own participation in the EOD, my original zine was *Moshassuck Review*, and I returned to that title in my final years in the order. In between, I also published *Snake Den*, *EOD Letter*, and *Ken's Kit and Kaboodle* (abbreviated KK&K, not KKK). Maybe I have forgotten a few titles.

The EOD has never had an official seal as such. Some Acolytes (like Michael Brown) have published their own versions of an EOD seal and the H. P. Lovecraft Historical Society offers for \$3.50 its own EOD "sticker":



However, most of the EOD seals that one finds on the internet belong to the occult organization which bears the same name as the EOD apa (see <https://esotericorderofdagon.net/> and other sites).

Most of my own contributions to the EOD apa were articles on obscure Lovecraftian topics. For example, my final contribution in the Candlemas 2026 mailing had articles on Lovecraft's relationship with President Millard Fillmore (he was also related to the Presidents Roosevelt and Bush) and an article on his relationship with Lydia (Perkins) Wardwell, who (in)famously

appeared naked in the Newbury, Massachusetts meeting house in 1663 to protest the persecution of the Quaker sect. She received a sound topless whipping with her arms tied above her head at the public whipping post before a crowd of jeering men and boys in retribution for her act. Reportedly, the men and boys were asked to determine when she had been sufficiently punished. Deborah (Buffum) Wilson had beat her to the punch in Salem in 1662, but Deborah only appeared naked in the street, not the meeting house. Deborah's topless whipping was at the cart's tail, not the whipping post. I think HPL would have preferred Nathaniel Hawthorne as his relative—which he was—above any of these Presidents or Quaker victims. If resources for the ancestry of Lovecraft and of U. S. presidents keep expanding, perhaps more presidential relatives will be found for HPL in the future. (I recommend keeping a watch on the relevant family trees on the free LDS site FamilySearch.) HPL did have some wrong ideas about his ancestry. He thought the wife of his Lovecraft immigrant ancestor Joseph Lovecraft (1774-1850) was Mary Fulford, not Mary Full (1782-1864)—and thereby fell many of his claims to royal ancestry. He thought the Quaker martyr Mary (Barrett) Dyer (d. 1660) was his ancestor, which she probably wasn't. He didn't know that religious dissenter Ann (Marbury) Hutchinson (d. 1643) was his ancestor. Through Ann Hutchinson he has some pretty solid royal ancestry.

Probably the most substantial piece of Lovecraft scholarship that I circulated in the EOD was *Devonshire Ancestry of Howard Phillips Lovecraft* (2003), with Christopher J. Docherty and A. Langley Searles (1920-2009) as coauthors. Langley was a fellow EOD Acolyte, most noted for his longtime journal *Fantasy Commentator*. Langley's research papers on Lovecraft are housed today at Temple University. I also published some fiction in the EOD, including notably my series "Tales of the Lovecraft Collectors," featuring collector David Parkes Boynton, and my tale "Lovecraft's Pillow" riffing on Stephen King's idea for a story based on the idea of a fellow who came into the possession of the very pillow HPL himself slept on. You can find all of this in my Hippo-

campus collection *Lovecraft's Pillow*. There was also a Necronomicon Press book *Tales of the Lovecraft Collectors*, with a luscious cover by Jason Eckhardt illustrating four of the tales. I think it's my favorite of all the covers my books have received.

But you probably didn't undertake the reading of this article for my ramblings on HPL. More likely, you wanted to learn more about the EOD. Despite my disadvantages (primarily the lack of most of my mailings), I hope I have provided you with at least a flavor of the EOD. Last year, the EOD had some special inducements to attract new members. If you are interested, please communicate with OE S. T. Joshi.

I foresee a bright future for the EOD apa. I think worldwide appreciation of Lovecraft's work is likely to continue to grow despite the assaults of the Hatecrafters. I will surely not survive to witness the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the EOD apa in 2073—I would be 125 years old in that year so don't wish that upon me. However, I hope I will be there in spirit to share in the big celebration. In summary, the EOD apa is a worldwide community of persons interested in Lovecraft and his work. The EOD already has more than fifty years history behind it and I expect it will continue to grow and to prosper as worldwide interest in HPL continues to grow. *Ad multos annos*—EOD apa.

P.S. for those interested in old EOD mailings: In addition to the 1972-2014 file of EOD mailings I donated to University of Iowa Special Collections (William H. Groveman Memorial Collection), the Lovecraft Collection at Brown University's John Hay Library has a full file. The OE sends one copy of each mailing to the Hay on a quarterly basis. Individual EODzines do show up for sale on the internet on an infrequent basis. I do not recall having ever seen full mailings or runs of mailings offered for sale, but it's quite possible that such



Ken's favorite cover of all his books

things will show up in the future or have been offered in the past and missed by me. Perhaps by the time the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the EOD rolls around in

2073, the full run of the EOD will have been digitally mastered and made available on the internet. So much for the efforts of the Acolytes who sought to preserve their privacy by sticking to pa-

per format for the mailings. Perhaps by the time this happens all of us Acolytes for whom privacy was so important will have migrated to Kadath-in-the-Cold-Waste. ♦

President's Message

Sea Serpents and Lovecraft Letters

by David Goudsward

I HAVE a couple of books on sea serpents that need to be completed this year, which means I have not been researching Lovecraft at all, and frankly, withdrawal is setting in. I have a couple of HPL projects on a back burner, but I may need to sneak a mention of Lovecraft in my history of New England sea serpents. I haven't exactly figured out how (yet), but don't be surprised if you see at least a slightly out-of-place passing mention of Lovecraft.



President David Goudsward

The reference to Lovecraft is my painfully obvious segue to the last book in the Hippocampus Press series of the collected correspondence of Lovecraft: *A Sense of Proportion – The Letters of H. P. Lovecraft and Frank Belknap Long*, edited by David E. Schultz and S. T. Joshi. This 856-page, \$85 hardcover is the final book in a 20-volume collection of most of H.P. Lovecraft's extant letters.

Former Fossil presidents Hyman Bradofsky and James F. Morton have volumes of their letters with Lovecraft, as does Fossil August Derleth. Others, such as Fossil presidents Edward and Sherman Cole and Helm Spink and editor Ralph Babcock, have their correspondence in volumes of collected letters too few to publish separately. Frank Belknap Long's involvement in amateur journalism, as a contributor and an officer, is overshadowed by his friendship with Lovecraft and his long career as a writer. Of course, to be a friend of Lovecraft means you were involved in Amateur Journalism as well.

Long was a Fossil for the 1976-77 year, recruited by Dirk Mosig and Russ Paxton. His new member introduction appeared in THE FOSSIL number 215 for July 1976, noting his plan to write a profile of his friend, amateur author and member of the Lovecraft circle, Samuel Loveman, who had just died in May 1976. The article never materialized. 1976 was a year when Long was distracted by Arkham House publishing a collection of his first two books of poetry (originally pub-

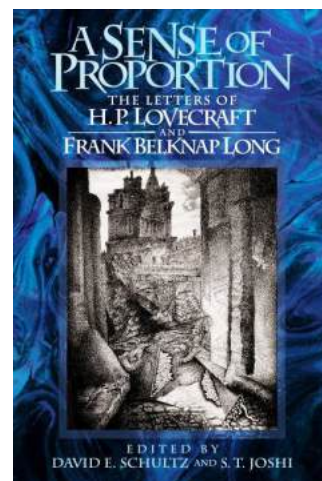
lished by W. Paul Cook and Robert Barlow) and Long's slapped-together memoir of Lovecraft as a response to L. Sprague de Camp's Lovecraft biography. (FOSSIL 215 has an excoriating review of de Camp by Mosig in the same issue as Long's introduction.)

At one point, Lovecraft considered Long the face of the next generation of amateur journalism, publishing some of Long's early work in his journal *The Conservative* and writing an anonymous tribute in the *United Amateur* (May 1924). But in Lovecraft's eyes, Long lowered his standards, choosing commercial success over the literary artistry he had shown in amateurdom.

A Sense of Proportion is not intended as a history of AJ, but still manages to be one. It is a fascinating look at organized amateurdom from the lens of two active members discussing day-to-day events: delayed issues of *The United Amateur*, Lovecraft congratulating Long on being elected 1st Vice President of the UAPA, and Long's horror at the poor condition of the latest *United Amateur* issue (1926), which had garbled his poem so badly he was embarrassed that Clark Ashton Smith, who Lovecraft had recruited into the UAPA in 1924, would see it. The two men discuss a variety of topics from ancient religion to modern politics, offering a fascinating look at the erudition of both authors. It is useful for readers looking for insider insights into the workings of Amateur Journalism and pulp magazines, but it is more than that. It is a time capsule of life in New York City and of two writers taking divergent career paths while maintaining a close friendship.

A Sense of Proportion – The Letters of H. P. Lovecraft and Frank Belknap Long is a limited edition of 500 copies (presumably with a two-volume trade paperback edition in the future), available only through the Hippocampus Press web catalog at

<https://www.hippocampuspress.com> ♦



Building an AJ History Library

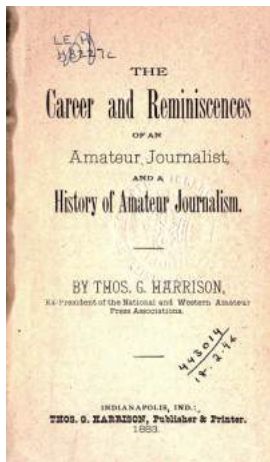
by Michael R. Brown

AS A RECENT enthusiast of amateur journalism history, I am interested in reading works on that subject. I prefer physical rather than online books, but original editions of many of the older titles are expensive. My recourse is purchasing a “print on demand” (POD) reprint.

Several companies take advantage of the many online scans of public domain works and POD technology to put out books reprinting these scans. Sadly, most simply reprint the raw scans without going the extra step of using OCR to reformat and clean up the text for easier reading, and none create additional editorial materials. My expectation is to receive a POD book within a couple of days, but some took months to arrive.

Here are some books I recently ordered:

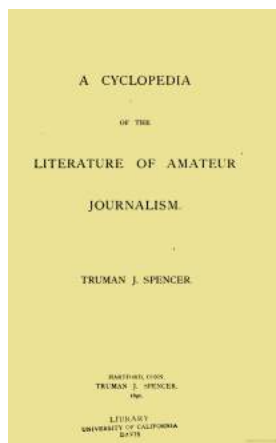
- **The Career and Reminiscences of an Amateur Journalist, and a History of Amateur Journalism**



by Thos. G. Harrison (1883, 330 pages). This is one of the first books about amateur journalism and its history. Its main focus is 1876 thru 1881, but it does cover some earlier years. Sadly, the author did not include a table of contents. I ordered a copy in October 2025 from Wentworth Press. By mid-March 2026 I gave up on ever seeing it, so cancelled the order and bought a more expensive one from Forgotten Books. The scan, apparently the one from the Internet Archive

taken from the original printing, is pretty clean, except on the next to the last page two lines of text are blank. I was surprised to find an Internet Archive scan of another version published by General Books in 2010 that re-typeset the book via OCR. It is very readable, although they should have removed extraneous text from the original headers. The new format reduced the book to 125 pages.

- **A Cyclopedia of the Literature of Amateur Journalism** by Truman J. Spencer (1891, 512 pages). This classic reprints “specimens of the work of the prominent writers of different periods of amateur journalism,” and provides brief biographies of those writers. I found three



different companies offering this work, all at different prices. I had difficulty obtaining it, with one order canceled. I finally got it from Legare Street Press. There are few issues with the scan, which came from either the Internet Archive or Google Books. The original text is small for the page, leaving a wide margin on all sides. I wish they had enlarged the text, although it is readable.

- **History of the National Amateur Press Association**, compiled by John Travis Nixon (1900, 350 pages).

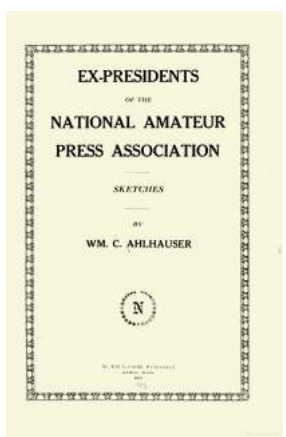


This book, published 24 years after NAPA was founded, gives a detailed history of its establishment and early history. This Legare Street Press reprint, with their generic cover, uses an Internet Archive scan that is decent. But why include blank end pages? This basic reprint of the as-is scan leaves some troubling issues. The main one is the nice foldout of the roster of conventions and officers is reduced to a third of one page, making it unreadable. There are

also areas of the text throughout the book where blocks of text are strangely shaded. In most cases it doesn't hurt readability, but there is no reason for this distraction. Someone should have checked the pages before it went to press. Instead of Legare selling it directly, there were a number of sellers on both Amazon and eBay offering this book at a variety of price points and shipping costs, and I had to examine several to work out the best price.

- **Ex-Presidents of the National Amateur Press Association** by William C. Ahlhauser, (published by W. Paul Cook, 1919, 93 pages).

This book profiles the first 53 NAPA presidents, from John Windslow Snyder in 1876 to W. Paul Cook in 1919. Each president gets a page or two, including a photograph. Leopold Classic Library, publishers of this edition, used the scan by Google Books from the New York Public



Library. The photographs came out well, but it would have been nice if they had cleaned up the library markings. I wish they had started their reprint with the title page on the right. Putting it on a

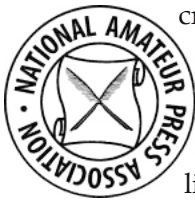
left page caused the main work to have page numbers on the inside gutter, rather than the outer edge. It wouldn't have been difficult to note and fix this.

As to other works, I discovered a nice Internet Archive scan of Truman Spencer's *History of Amateur Journalism*, published by The Fossils in 1957. Unfortunately, the dust jacket was not included. Because of its recent publication, it is not yet in the public domain and so not available as a reprint. Missing from the Internet Archive is the index later published as a separate book by The Fossils. I was fortunate to obtain a copy, which I scanned and sent to them, hoping that if someone does reprint the history they will also include the index.

Official Editor's Message

Birthdays: NAPA's 150th and AAPA's 90th

by Dave Tribby



INDIVIDUALS, usually adolescent boys, have practiced amateur journalism since the early 19th century, creating small magazines to share with friends. The hobby's popularity soared in the years after the Civil War, fueled by inexpensive table-top printing presses. In the early 1870s this growing number of publishers formed local, state, and regional groups. The formation of a permanent national group came to fruition when sixty-five boys gathered in Philadelphia during July 1876 at the Centennial Exhibition and created the National Amateur Press Association. This month we celebrate the 150th anniversary of that event. To learn more about the group and its beginnings, visit the History section of NAPA's website, found at

www.amateurpress.org/history/

Twenty years later, while the National was going strong, a new generation of youth were inspired by a growing number of juvenile magazines. One of these, *Golden Hours*, promoted local clubs. In September 1895 a 14-year-old member of the Philadelphia club formed the United Amateur Press Association, hoping to attract members from these local groups into one that was national in scope. The UAPA founders were unaware of NAPA, but once they discovered one another they grew into fiercely competitive rivals. The senior group regarded the junior as inferior, and tried to lure its best members away. The United eventually went through a number of splits, and its last remaining faction ceased activity in 2006.

Election Reminder

FOR THE FIRST time since 2010, there is a Fossils election. Usually, there are two candidates for the two open trustee positions, and the president declares them as elected, avoiding the need for mailing ballots to members, then have them filled out and returned.

That happened again this year, but, as President Goudswaard noted in his April message, there is an amendment to our by-laws, a clarification to the duties of the secretary-treasurer requested by our bank.

Secretary-Treasurer Tom Parson is to prepare ballots and mail them to each member by July 10. Members then mark the ballots and return them to Tom no later than July 31.

In the 1930s a group of young United members had fresh ideas on how to improve the group, but the old guard did not want to give up any power and instead forced them out. Feeling no love for the rival NAPA, these "Crusaders" formed a new group, "independent of all similar clubs and their nefarious practices." They named it the American Amateur Press Association and mailed their first bundle in September 1936. This fall we celebrate the AAPA's 90th anniversary. The July 1961 issue of *THE FOSSIL* included a monumental history of AAPA's first 25 years, "The Stronghold of Youth," in which Lee Hawes describes nefarious practices, strong personalities, and unexpected challenges. We are pleased to provide a 21-page scan of that article on our website at

www.thefossils.org/TheStrongholdOfYouth.pdf



Virtual AJ History Library

If Michael Brown's article "Building an AJ History Library" piques your curiosity about the earliest days of amateur journalism and you would like a look at the online scans of the books he mentions, head to the "History" section on The Fossils' website

www.thefossils.org/history.html

where you will find links into HathiTrust Digital Library, Google Books, and the Internet Archive where you can see the books he mentions.

In addition to those books, we includes links to magazine articles about amateur journalism published between 1882 and 1924. Among my favorites are these from *St. Nicholas* magazine:

- “Amateur Newspapers” (1882): the publicity from this article generated a large number of NAPA recruits.
- “A Convention of Amateur Journalists” (1883): a humorous description of a fictional NAPA political campaign.
- “Little Things” (1920): the amazing story of five young sisters publishing in the early 1870s.



An Owl Returns

In the last issue we had some fun asking Artificial Intelligence assistant ChatGPT to modify the Fossil emblem in honor of our 125th anniversary, coming up in 2029. The first design was bizarre, but a second one, with its detailed drawing of an owl sitting in the center, was reminiscent of an owl that first graced covers of *THE FOSSIL* 62 years ago.

When Jack Dow took over as editor for the autumn 1964 issue (number 181) he introduced a number of in-



novations, including the use of spot color and re-designing both the front-page flag and masthead to include a new owl. This owl was drawn in much more detail than the one on the emblem and was printed in two colors. (The emblem itself, a regular part of the masthead since at least 1929, was no longer present.) His first and third issues used a deep, bright red, while the middle issue featured dark blue. Issue 184 (summer 1965) started a new volume, numbered 64, with a re-design that omitted the owl entirely, although it did return to its perch in the masthead for issue 185.

When the next issue appeared in March 1967, Interim Editor Matilda Haywood noted, “Because of family death and illness, coupled with business problems, Editor Jack Dow was unable to continue with the fine issues that started his volume. He was reluctant to resign until the situation was seemingly impossible to resolve, at which time he informed Board of Directors members by telephone of his situation.” Tillie brought her own literary and typographic style to the job, but the new owl had flown away and the traditional emblem was back on the masthead.

The “Dow owl” finally returned to the nameplate in a slightly smaller and monochromatic format when Russ Paxton took over editorship with number 211 in July 1975. The emblem remained on the masthead. Russ retained that configuration through his eight years as editor. Subsequent editors kept a similar look, although the owl shrank a bit and lost some of his detail over the years.

When Ken Faig, Jr., took over editing duties with issue 322 for October 2004 he started by reprinting the very first front page of *THE FOSSIL* from October 1904, with the nameplate used by Russ Paxton reproduced on the inside front page. His next issue moved the emblem front and center in the nameplate, between “The” and “Fossil.” There it remained through the remainder of his eight years and into the next four, until I nudged it to the left margin beginning with volume 112 (number 365 for October 2015).

After 22 years of exile, volume 123 seems an opportune time for the “Dow owl” to return to *THE FOSSIL*. I scanned the two-color flag from the autumn 1964 issue, then isolated the owl’s two colors using the graphics editor GIMP. That allowed me to shift the owl’s coloring from a bright red to a more golden brown. Should it be in the nameplate or masthead? Check the next issue and find out.



Canadian Fanzines

Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada is home to the Norman V. Lamb Gothic Fantasy Collection, which preserves Canadian pulp magazine, science

fiction, and fantasy fandom materials.

They have digitized 65 issues of 13 fanzine titles, all published in Canada between 1941 and 1980, and made them available in the Internet Archives at

archive.org/details/lamb_gothic_fantasy

The selected titles are: *8-Ball* (1943), *Canadian Fandom* (1943–1955), *Censored* (1941–1951), *Croutch News* (1941), *Dark Fantasy* (1973–1980), *Light* (1937–1963), *Mephisto* (1942–1943), *Science Fiction* (1941–1942), *Spectra* (1946), *Tinker* (1947), *Vanations* (1952–1953), *The Voice* (1945–1946), and *Vulcan* (1942).

These publications are made available using “Controlled Digital Lending” practices and technologies, which allow libraries to loan digitized materials in a “lend like print” fashion, making them available to only one user at a time.



Light for May 1946

University of Sydney's A. J. Collection

Alie Speirs, Cultural Collections Discovery Manager in the Rare Books and Special Collections department at The University of Sydney's Fisher Library in Australia recently wrote after finding the university's listing on the “Collections” page of our website:

We are in the process of indexing a large set of the monthly mail outs for both the BAPA and the National Amateur Press Association, as well as a large collection of items collected by one Mr. Leon Stone of New South Wales. Some of the mail outs were never opened.

Is there a database or central list for these mail outs and amateur publication titles generally that we could check? I would be most appreciative of any assistance with this.

I will have to send a follow up to update you on the extent of our holdings, because it is significantly larger than the currently provided number of titles. We have only now had the resources to continue indexing this collection.

The son of early Australian amateur journalist and one of the founders of The Fossils, Hal E. Stone (1872–1956), Leon Stone first became active in the hobby in 1915. He held his own membership in The Fossils from the late 1940s to the early 1960s.

Beginning in 1920, Leon amassed a large collection of amateur journals, including many unique items. By 1943 he estimated his Australian Library of Amateur Journalism held 10,000 amateur papers and in 1952 it

had grown to 15,000. Tragically his home, including his collection, was destroyed by a fire in 1960. Apparently he was able to re-assemble a substantial collection that the university now holds.

The April 2008 (No. 336) and April 2009 (No. 340) issues of THE FOSSIL, both available online, contain articles that feature him.

I wrote back to Alie to let her know I have Gary Bossler's ORC translation of many NAPA Historian reports, if they might be helpful, and to invite her to write a FOSSIL article describing how the library came to hold the amateur journals, the extent of the collection, and how they will be used.

In the meantime, are there any other indexes of amateur journals readers might be willing to share? Perhaps if we pooled our efforts we could create a combined index that would be helpful to researchers.

Keep Us Updated

One of the April issues was returned to me about two weeks after I mailed it. The envelope was marked

RETURN TO SENDER

VACANT

UNABLE TO FORWARD

I emailed the member to find out what was wrong, and he was surprised at the result. He had recently moved and figured the Post Office would not have any trouble forwarding his mail.

So, just in case your postal carrier isn't on top of things, be sure to let Secretary-Treasurer Tom Parson, and also me, know when your address changes. ♦

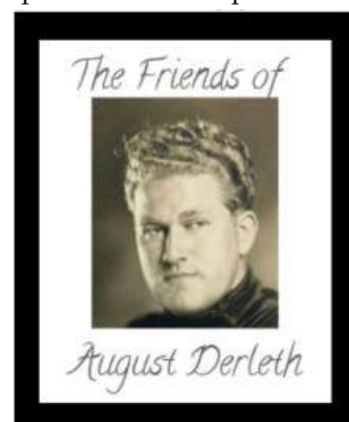
New Derleth Organization

THE FRIENDS of August Derleth, an organization dedicated to the works and publications of prolific writer and former Fossil August Derleth (1909–1971), was incorporated as a Colorado nonprofit on May 2. The organization plans to publish new editions of over twenty of the author's out of print works, and also produce a newsletter twice a year. Details can be found at

www.friendsofaugustderleth.org

First announcement of the new organization came from a May 19 entry on the blog of S. T. Joshi, who is serving as vice president of the Friends.

Derleth was a member of The Fossils for twenty years beginning in the mid-1940s. ♦



The Historians of Amateur Journalism

by Sheldon C. Wesson

BY A SIMPLE self-generated process (constitutional amendment) The Fossils, Inc., has wriggled out of an old skin, and emerges with a shiny new look.



Sheldon C. Wesson (1961)

This is the second such metamorphosis in our sixty-seven-year history. First as a sort of Last Man's Club, a reunion society that harked back to the Nineteenth Century, The Fossils called themselves "Amateur Journalists of the Past." They demanded that prospective members be active in the hobby at least 30 years before applying for membership.

More recently, we have called ourselves "The Alumni of Amateur Journalism," and have demanded 15 years' apprenticeship in the real world before entering the hazy realms of Fossildom.

Now, by action of the 67th Annual Meeting, we have redesignated ourselves "The Historians of Amateur Journalism," and we invite the support in that effort of all persons who have three years' experience in amateur journalism.

Although traditionalists grumbled, this action truly recognizes the present role of The Fossils and recognizes the broader membership base and the broader financial support which we need to fulfill the specialized roles which we have chosen to fulfill in the present era of our existence.

New Goals

At the present time our new goals are:

1. To coordinate the efforts of all three major amateur journalists' organizations (NAPA, AAPA and UAP) and The Fossils, for the management of the Library of Amateur Journalism. This is the common repository of amateur papers published by all three major groups, and by others in the United States and abroad. This activity requires more financial support than a membership of fewer than 100 "alumni" can provide.
2. To publish THE FOSSIL primarily as a medium for articles relating to the history of amateur journalism. This expense is self-evident.
3. To recognize quality of written and published material in amateur journalism. This The Fossils now

do by providing two prizes per year to laureate winners in each of the three major ajay associations. These are the Edward H. Cole Memorial Awards. So long as a substantial supply of books (principally Spencer's *History of Amateur Journalism*) remain in the Custodian's keeping, this is a minimal annual expense and will be for perhaps 15 to 20 years.

4. To maintain a file of back copies of THE FOSSIL, available to all amateur journalists through exchange or purchase, so that any amateur journalist may collect a file of these official organs and thus have for himself the interesting and entertaining material that has been published in our official organ over the years.
5. To make available to individuals and libraries the remaining copies of Truman J. Spencer's *History of Amateur Journalism* which The Fossil published in a limited edition in 1957. There are many newer members of the three major ajay associations who do not even know that this book exists. The Custodian reminds them through a printed flyer, from time to time; and new ajays who become engrossed in the history of their hobby may purchase copies.
6. To hold an annual meeting at which members and non-members are welcome, at which a minimum of official business is transacted and at which just the fun of meeting and talking dominates.

The Fossils

It must be made clear from the beginning that The Fossils are not, and never have been, a "publishing" association; and so never have been in competition with the NAPA, AAPA or UAP.

The Fossils have always offered its activities to amateur journalists as strictly supplementary to the primary aim of the hobby—which is to write material for and to print and publish amateur journals.

That is true now, perhaps truer than ever, because the principal activities of The Fossils are those which are performed on behalf of all three major "active" associations.

Amateur journalists who are embroiled in the active world of publishing for the NAPA, AAPA or UAP may wish to join The Fossils as a means of contributing \$4.00 a year toward its activities. In exchange, they receive THE FOSSIL, and have as much or as little contact as they desire with other amateur journalists (both active and inactive) who share the same goals.

Any amateur journalist who wishes to join The

Fossils in this passive sense, merely to help with the financing of the Library, is entirely welcome to do so. Any amateur journalist who wishes to go a bit farther, and to participate actively in the management of these projects or of The Fossils, Inc. itself, is also welcome. He may even submit to the blandishments of the nominating committee in due course, and accept an office.

But it cannot be emphasized too strongly that this participation in The Fossils should be considered supplementary to—and not a distraction from—the activity of publishing. Membership in The Fossils should sharpen an active amateur's enjoyment of his hobby, through knowledge of and association with its fascinating history.

Editor's Note

Much has changed in the fifty-six years since former Fossil Editor (1957-62) and President (1962-63) Sheldon Wesson penned these words. What became of the new goals he described?

1. Preserving the Library of Amateur Journalism was accomplished in 2004 when it was donated to the Special Collections department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In 2016, The Fossils joined with AAPA and NAPA to establish a permanent endowment to fund its maintenance.
2. Publishing THE FOSSIL continues to be a primary purpose.
3. While The Fossils no longer recognizes laureate winners, since 1986 we have managed the Russell L. Paxton Memorial Award for Service to Amateur Journalism, financed by Fossil John Horn.
4. We no longer have a repository of back issues, but 22 years of THE FOSSIL are freely available on our website.
5. The Custodian's supply of books has been depleted for many years. As noted elsewhere in this issue, Spencer's *History* is available online.
6. Since the United disbanded and the American quit holding conventions, The Fossils no longer uses other groups' meetings as a way to get together. Our last big gathering was at Amateur Journalism Conference 2016.

When Ken Faig became Editor in October 2004 he noted the organization's purpose had changed in the century since its founding:

The role of The Fossils as we enter our second century is significantly changed from the role our founding fathers envisaged. We still preserve their "fraternal" vision in our annual reunion luncheons, but otherwise we have moved on to other concerns than the founding fathers anticipated. What has remained constant is our love for the amateur journalism hobby. The hobby is ever-changing. Will the "bloggers" of today be the am-

ateur journalists of tomorrow? Tomorrow is yet to emerge. The primary mission of The Fossils, today, is to ensure that the future of the amateur journalism hobby will be informed by a rich knowledge of its past. I hope that under my editorship THE FOSSIL will be able to play a small role in pursuing this mission. Today's amateur journalists are no different than yesterday's amateur journalists in the diversity of their opinions concerning the future of the hobby. We have among us both optimists and pessimists. Even if the pessimists are right and amateur journalism does not survive in recognizable form to mark its two hundredth anniversary at mid-twenty-first century, the preservation of the printed record of our hobby, 1850-2050, remains an important objective for The Fossils. Long after all of us who have celebrated this Fossil centennial year of 2004 have passed from the scene, I cherish the hope that students of our cultural heritage will be grateful to The Fossils for all that we did to preserve the record of the amateur journalism hobby for posterity.

As we approach The Fossils' 125th anniversary in 2029, is it time to restate our priorities? ♦

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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