THE FUTURE IS UPON US

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Guy Miller

After you have read the account of our 101st Annual Luncheon in the July issue of The Fossil and have looked over the accompanying program, we trust that you will agree that we did a commendable job in observing the 100th anniversary of our founding. To round off the event, we will soon have ready for public distribution our Centenary which, although not a history in the strictest sense, still will reflect a vivid picture of the vicissitudes weathered by our organization over its century of activity.

Especially, as you read Ken Faig's report of the history of the Library of Amateur Journalism will you see how greatly this Collection has influenced the fortunes of our group. Designed at the outset to be a congenial mingling of like-minded "old-timers" (founder Edwin Hadley Smith was all of 34), immediately upon the purchase of Smith's accumulation, it became anything but. Until the transfer of the Library to Stayton OR, hardly a year was free of heated debate over where the Collection should be stored or of concern over its care once a home had been found. Finally, in 1982, after a bruising battle which saw the loss of too many valued members, the Collection was finally placed in the capable hands of our present Librarian Mike Horvat. Since that time, Mike has been such a faithful steward that most Fossils have all but forgotten the fact that, indeed, The Fossils, Inc., is responsible for the future of a most valuable asset.

But, not all of us. For example, belatedly awakened to our duties, we established a Library of Amateur Journalism Fund which now boasts over $1000 for use by the Librarian for day-to-day expenses should he care to draw on it; and then, realizing that time takes its toll of us all, we established a LAJ Committee whose duties include surveying once again possible future homes for the Collection. Well, the future is upon us. For reasons of health, our loyal Librarian must give up his post; and the Collection must be moved from Stayton. Fortunately, our LAJ Committee composed of Ken Faig, Jr., Chairman; Lee Hawes, Stan Oliner, and Mike Horvat is in a position to wrestle with the formidable challenges of organizing and preparing the collection for shipping as well as contacting possible repositories. Chairman Faig has circulated among the Boards of Directors and Trustees a draft of a proposed letter to target institutions and two other members are making their own private survey of likely sites. In addition, I had appointed Vice President Ron Young as my personal "eyes and ears" to visit Librarian Mike Horvat in order to help me to get a grip on the specifics of what we are facing. Ron's sudden passing after by-pass surgery takes from us a gentle friend as well as an ever-reliable helper. As for his planned journey to Stayton, fortunately, Ivan Snyder from nearby Portland OR, who was to accompany Ron, has agreed to carry on as soon as favorable arrangements can be made. We are indebted to Ivan for offering his help.

Acting alone, this entire undertaking would prove punishing to anyone half my age and with twice my stamina. But, as you can see, I am not alone, in fact, the meanest challenges have been removed from my shoulders by so many supporters that we cannot help but succeed in our endeavors to bring the task of finding a haven for the Library of Amateur Journalism to a successful conclusion.

OFFICIAL EDITOR'S REPORT

Ken Faig, Jr.

Welcome to the first issue of The Fossil under my editorship. I hope it marks the beginning of a long association. While I am a relative newcomer to the amateur journalism hobby (The Fossils, 1995; NAPA, 1996; AAPA, 2003), I do have a deep interest in and respect for its long and distinguished history.
My own file of *The Fossil* is one of the most cherished parts of my own library of amateur journals. For over a century, many members of The Fossils have labored to ensure the preservation of the history of the amateur journalism hobby. I think especially of Truman Spencer, who assumed the presidency of this organization in the midst of the controversy surrounding the removal of the Library of Amateur Journalism from its longtime New York City home to the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In addition to the duties of the presidency in 1934-35, Spencer undertook the editorship of *The Fossil* and remained in that office until his death in 1944. His volume of *The Fossil* is I think one of the most admirable ever published, with brilliantly intertwined themes of respect for the past and its associations and consciousness of the importance of preserving the record of the amateur journalism hobby for the future. On top of his duties with *The Fossil*, Spencer devoted the final years of his life to the composition and revision of his history of the amateur journalism, which Fossils Sheldon and Helen Wesson saw to publication in 1957. I think also of the elegant member biographies which Historian Evan Reed Riale used to publish in *The Fossil* of the 1920s. So there is a lot of history behind the publication whose editorship I am now undertaking.

You will notice a change in format in this issue. It results not from any desire for change for its own sake, but simply from the present limitations of the editor's computing set-up and from the desire to relieve President Miller of some part of the responsibility for the composition and production of *The Fossil*. Since President Miller will still be doing the printing, we will still have the opportunity for appropriate illustrations despite the change in format. I hope that the change in format will offer an opportunity for longer contributions to *The Fossil*. Besides reporting the activities of our organization, I have the hope that *The Fossil* will reflect our mission as “historians of amateur journalism” with a new flourishing of articles concerning the history of our hobby. In order to attain this goal, however, there must be amateur journalists willing to contribute the results of their research to our publication. I do not foresee that we will have any word count limitation in our new format, although the very longest articles may have to appear serially. Guy Miller's article on the history of the various UAPA and UAPAA associations and factions from *The National Amateur* dated December 1995 provides an excellent example of the kind of material which I will be seeking as editor. In addition, I hope to continue the series of interviews with distinguished amateur journalists which I began with my interview with the late Ralph Babcock in *The Fossil* number 313 for June 2001. My success or failure as editor will largely be determined by your willingness as members to support me with contributions to *The Fossil*.

This issue of *The Fossil* appears as we mark notable anniversaries in the history of our organization. The cover page of the vol. I no. 1 of *The Fossil* dated October 1904 appears in facsimile as the cover of this issue as we enter our one hundred first publication volume. At the Fossil luncheon held at the Lexington, Kentucky convention of the National Amateur Press Association on July 3, 2004, we celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of that gathering of alumni of the amateur journalism hobby at the Arena Hotel in New York City which resulted in the foundation of *The Fossils* on May 28, 1904. From facsimile cover page of the first issue, you will note that Dr. Edwin B. Swift proposed at that initial meeting that the name of the organization be “The Old Boys”--and in retrospect we are certainly fortunate that Dr. Swift's motion was “laid on the table” at the founding meeting. Charles H. Young, the first President of The Fossils, still described the organization as the “Oldtimers' Association” in his message in the first issue of *The Fossil*. Most of the twenty-four pages of that issue were occupied by the speeches of the forty-four amateurs and two guests who attended the organizational meeting and by the messages received from those unable to attend. Eight pages of member photographs appeared between pages twelve and thirteen; short biographies of those depicted appeared on pages eighteen through twenty. (How far did amateurs travel to attend the organization meeting? I note with surprise that Australian amateur Hal E. Stone was among those who attended.) Tucked away among all the speeches, however, was the “Report of the Constitution Committee,” signed by Frank J. Martin, Louis Kempner, Jos. Dana Miller, Charles C. Heuman and J. Roosevelt Gleason, at the Montauk Club, Brooklyn, N.Y., August 31, 1904. The initial constitution was simple enough to be reprinted here in full:

Name and Object.
This organization shall be known as “The Fossils.” Its object shall be the perpetuation of the friendships formed as youths in Amateur Journalism, and the encouragement of those now engaged in the same pursuit.

Rules of Government.

Membership shall be restricted to such persons as were actively and honorably engaged in Amateur Journalism prior to 1890.

The officers shall be a president, a vice-president, a secretary, a treasurer, and an official editor. They shall be elected annually and perform the duties usual to their office.

The president shall appoint a membership committee of three and such other committees as he deems advisable.

The reunions of this association shall be held semi-annually at the call of the president, unless otherwise determined by the association.

The initiation fee shall be $2; the annual dues shall be $1.

Those who occupied these offices for the first official Fossil year (1904-05) were: Charles H. Young, president; Will T. Scofield, vice-president; Edwin Hadley Smith, secretary; John Edson Briggs, treasurer; and Joseph Dana Miller, official editor. President Young personally financed the printing of the first issue of The Fossil. Editor Joseph Dana Miller described the aims of the journal in these paragraphs in the first issue:

“This paper is the first number of the official organ of the “Fossils.” It will be issued, if possible, four times a year. Its purpose will be to keep the old-timers informed of the news of the movements of those who years ago were active in Amateur Journalism. Its sole purpose is, therefore, fraternal. We are not interested in advertising the claims of Amateur Journalism to the general public, although we gladly bear witness to the value to the youth of the country of the work that years ago enlisted our boyish enthusiasms.

“But all that will be merely incidental to the general aim, which is to provide a medium over which the friends of boyhood may again clasp hands and exchange memories and renew old friendships. The journal will be a record of the present activities of those we knew in the little world of letters as boys and young men and girls who are now active in work which cannot by any possibility seem as serious to them as the labors which engaged their energies as Amateur Journalists. And, indeed, in very many cases such work cannot be any more serious. It is common cant which looks upon play and recreation as things of little moment, and upon the mere making of a living as the really portentous thing. The only value recommending any activity is the possibility of development it affords to mind and morals. In other words, the use of living is growth, and if this be so, then the years spent in Amateur Journalism were the most momentous of all the years of our lives.

“Perhaps we estimate too lightly, too, the value of our heritage in the inspiring friendships left us from these early associations. To perpetuate these will be the office of the association and the journal of which it is the organ. Not Amateur Journalism, but all that its memories mean—that is the real reason for the springing into being of the association for which we now venture to predict a long life.”

The Fossils have changed a great deal since Joseph Dana Miller penned these words, but his prediction of a long life has proven accurate. In 1916, The Fossils undertook an important new mission when Charles C. Heuman purchased on their behalf the Library of Amateur Journalism assembled by Edwin Hadley Smith. The history of the Library of Amateur Journalism is still being written at the present time as new generations of Fossils wrestle with its destiny. In recognition of the importance of this charge, The Fossils incorporated in New York in the mid-1920s and then reincorporated once again in Oregon in the mid-1980s when Martin M. (“Mike”) Horvat assumed the office of librarian and custodianship of the Library of Amateur Journalism. Of course, the eligibility rules for membership have changed over the years; had the original requirements remained in place the organization must needs have lapsed around 1970 when the last centenarian members active prior to 1890 went to glory. Today, the Fossils who gather for the annual Fossil luncheons hosted by the various amateur press associations, and their guests, are all of them active amateur journalists. The idea that participation in the amateur journalism hobby should be restricted to those under the age of majority—once strenuously maintained by many of our Fossil founding fathers—has long since yielded to the recognition that the amateur journalism hobby may be enjoyed by persons of all ages, literally from nine to ninety. In
fact, I suspect examples of amateur journalists both younger than nine years and older than ninety years can readily be cited.

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 luncheon reunions, 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 amateur journalists of tomorrow? Tomorrow is yet to emerge. The primary mission of The Fossils, today, is to ensure that 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.

IN MEMORIAM

RONALD J. YOUNG
FOSSIL VICE PRESIDENT

Tom Parson

I have just received word that our long-time friend and printing cohort Ron Young died early Sunday morning [September 12, 2004] following complications from recent heart bypass surgery. Ron's daughter Carolyn said a memorial service will be held Thursday, September 16, 2004, at 10:30 am, at the Northglenn (Colorado) United Methodist Church, with burial at Fort Logan at 2:30.

Ron was active over many years in both the National Amateur Press Association and the American Amateur Press Association, publishing a fine hobby journal, The Plumb Line. His publishing often featured poetry and stories by other aj writers. Ron printed with a Kelsey Star treadle platen press but also published using both offset and computer technology, from his homes in Colorado and Louisiana over the years. Ron was active as well in The Fossils, helping preserve the history of amateur journalism, currently serving as Vice President; and he regularly attended gatherings of the Rocky Mountain Letterpress Society (which we persisted in calling the Wrong Fonts). I think he was also a member of the Amalgamated Printers Association in earlier years. Following the death of his wife Helen several years ago, he renewed and increased his aj participation, serving in various offices whenever a need arose. Always a steady and helpful resource, our tall, modest friend and partner will be missed. He was one of the best—a true gentleman and friend.

Thanks to Bill Boys and Bill Venrick for this report on the loss of our Vice President. Expressions of condolence from fellow Fossils can reach Ron's daughter Carolyn Rice Young at 5623 West Alder Avenue, Littleton, CO 80128-6028.

PATRICIA JENNINGS

Patricia Jennings, 78, widow of longtime Fossil member Jeffrey H. Jennings (1919-1999), died July 30, 2004. A memorial service for Patricia and Jeff was held on August 15, 2004 at University Friends Church, Wichita, Kansas.

Patricia Walmsley and Jeff Jennings were married in 1945, the year after Jeff, a graduate of Columbia College and Columbia Law School, was admitted to the New York bar.

Pat and Jeff are survived by a son Randolph and daughters Andrea Williams, Alison Dugan, and Sharon Jennings.


Thanks to Bill Boys and Gary Bossler for the information in this notice.
BRUCE SMITH

Longtime AAPA member Bruce Smith, 81, died Saturday, August 21, 2004. He joined AAPA in May 1937 and for some years had the distinction of having more years of AAPA membership than any other current member. He attended the very first AAPA convention in 1938, and was one of the first AAPA mailers, in 1939-40.

Those at the 2002 AAPA convention in Illinois remember seeing Bruce there, in good spirits and enjoying himself, even though he had to carry a canister of oxygen. His wife Alida was also there, along with daughter Kerry of nearby Alton, Illinois, also an AAPA member.

A memorial service was held on Wednesday, August 24, 2004 at the First Congregational Church in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. Cards of condolence can reach the family at 18305 St. James Road, Brookfield, WI 53045-1406.

Thanks to Les Boyer and Bill Venrick for the information in this notice.

FOSSIL NOTES

The Editor welcomes notices regarding recent activities and achievements of our members.

Birthday greetings to our senior Fossil member, Marion Wyllie of Owen Sound, Ontario. Marion will celebrate her ninety-eighth birthday on October 26, 2004. Her correspondent, Membership Chair Martha E. Shivvers, reports that Marion still writes, using her computer, and from time to time presents programs for her church and for poetry groups. Marion was at one time the Canadian Fossils “news” reporter. Soft Voices was Marion's journal in the United Amateur Press Association. Happy birthday, Marion. Just as The Fossil marks its own centennial this year, we hope we will have occasion to celebrate your one hundredth birthday two years hence.

Thanks also to Martha Shivvers for a copy of the brochure Ann Vrooman: Mendocino Artist. Dating from about fifteen years ago, the text nevertheless reflects some of Ann's many talents:

“Ann grew up in New England where the splendor of autumn, the softness of the first winter snow, the lovely stillness of a pond, color playing over a cranberry bog, and the varied rhythm of the Atlantic surf piqued her creative urge, and provided the background of sound and feeling in the stories and poems she wrote over the years.

“In the Fifties, Ann felt the immense need to paint. She attended classes at Pasadena City College, University of Redlands, and then worked three years with John Collier, well-known in the Southland for his seascapes and landscapes in oil.

“A necessary move for the family brought Ann to the Morro Bay area where she furthered her art work and instruction with Harold Forgestein and other teachers. The sand dunes at Oceano, the wild nasturtiums at San Simeon, the almond blossoms at Paso Robles were subjects for her art.

“Now in Mendocino these past eight years, Ann has enjoyed painting the unique beauty alien to this rugged north coast with its special turquoise-azure water, wave-sculpted tunnels, small villages, and soft spring meadows. She has attended classes taught by Dorr Bothwell, Hilda Pertha, Al Need, George Post, Warren Zimmer and Stan Wacholz, and is signed up for summer courses this year.

“Working alone in the field, or with a friendly group of rugged watercolorists, Ann soaks up the area's special atmosphere, be it alive with sunshine and wind or mystical with fog. She works to achieve small miracles on canvas or watercolor paper born of intense feeling for nature and human-ness. Thank God for the gift of life and this place to be alive in, is her daily creed.”

A separate sheet comments on Ann's enameling on copper paintings:

“The play of light on precious metals, color that has the clarity of a fine jewel, fluidity in solid form, all interact in the creation of enameling.

“Enameling is a sensitive, evocative artform, which begins with a combination of finely ground, specially formulated glass which is layered over copper and fired at 1500 degrees Fahrenheit. Ann Vrooman places each painting into the kiln as often as a dozen times in order to achieve the most effective luminosity from her combination of transparent, opalescent, and opaque colors. These paintings can be weathered out of doors as well as hung inside since they are strong and durable as well as appealing to the eye.

“Ann has painted in oils and watercolor for many years, and has welcomed the addition of this fascinating challenge to discover all the subtleties of
the enameling process."

Ann is also the author of the novel Black Frost (iUniverse.com, 1999).

**PUBLICATION NOTES**


Herman C. Koenig (1893-1959) was a member of The Fossils from 1948 until his death. His obituary, written by Edward H. Cole, appeared in *The Fossil* for January 1960 (p. 147).

Herman C. Koenig was by profession an electrical engineer and by avocation a book collector and an amateur journalist. He was a friend and correspondent of noted amateur journalist Howard Phillips Lovecraft and a member of Lovecraft's literary circle The Kalem Club in New York City, so-called because the surnames of most of its members began with the letters K, L or M. In 1936 Koenig issued a small edition of Lovecraft's Charleston SC travelogue (originally a letter to Koenig dated January 12, 1936), today one of the toughest items for Lovecraft collectors.

Like Lovecraft, Koenig was a devotee of supernatural literature, and he was probably best noted among the Lovecraft Circle for his championship of the then-neglected work of William Hope Hodgson. Koenig was instrumental in the publication of the omnibus collection of Hodgson's work, *The House on the Borderland and Other Novels*, by Arkham House in 1946, and wrote the introduction for the volume.

As an amateur publisher, Koenig was best-known for the twenty issues of *The Reader and Collector* which he issued for the Fantasy Amateur Press Association. Koenig also published a number of articles, mostly on literary topics, in *The Fossil*, including an account of his hospitalization following a heart attack in 1955 (*The Fossil*, January 1957).

Eugene J. Biancheri is the husband of Koenig's daughter Ann Catherine and is thus well-equipped to write about his father-in-law. His work is subtitled "A Biographical Sketch with an Annotated Bibliography" and fulfills all that is promised in its subtitle. There are several illustrations, including a photographic frontispiece depicting Koenig at age forty-five. The handsomely produced booklet was designed with the assistance of professional artist Stephen E. Fabian.

Biancheri offers a balanced account of his father-in-law's life and work. A graduate of the Cooper Union Institution, Koenig spent his entire working career at Electrical Testing Laboratories (ELT) in New York City, living in close proximity to his work. His professional career was capped by his election to the ELT Board of Directors in 1953. He served in the U.S. Army in 1918-19 and married Lillian C. Cronin, by whom he had three daughters, in 1924.

Fossils who are interested in this account of our former colleague Herman C. Koenig may write to the publisher Eugene J. Biancheri at 91 Fieldstone Place, Wayne, NJ 07470-6448.


This is the first of five projected volumes of Lovecraft's collected essays. The second volume, *Literary Criticism*, was published simultaneously with the first volume in 2004. Subsequent volumes are scheduled for publication in 2005-6: *Science* (2005), *Travel* (2006), and *Philosophy, Autobiography and Miscellany* (2006). The thematic organization of the collected essays should make for easier reading and reference by readers interested in various aspects of Lovecraft's work.

Of course, the first volume *Amateur Journalism*, is the centerpiece for readers interested in Lovecraft's participation in the amateur journalism hobby. While amateur writings which belong thematically to the later volumes are deferred to those volumes, volume 1 contains all of Lovecraft's writings which concerned themselves primarily with the hobby. These writings contain all of the criticism which he wrote both for UAFA (1914-24) and NAPA (1931-35). His focus was verse criticism and these critical essays show how he progressed from a strict insistence upon classical forms (i.e., rhyme and metrical regularity) to an insistence upon valid matter for poetical expression.

Of course, there are also many sidelights on his participation in the hobby, including his presidential messages both for UAFA (1914-24) and NAPA (1931-35). Voted out of office in UAFA in 1922, with the rest of his "literary" faction, Lovecraft soon found a berth as interim president of NAPA after the resignation of William Dowdell in November.
1922. (James F. Morton recruited him for this position.) He turned down Edward H. Cole's plea that he stand for a full term as NAPA president in 1923-24 to return to office in UAPA. Lovecraft married Sonia Haft Greene (1883-1972) in March 1924 and removed to New York City where he and his wife presided over the gradual fade-out of the old Hoffman-Daas faction of the United in 1924-26. (Sonia Lovecraft later married Dr. Nathaniel Davis, and was herself a member of The Fossils in the late 1940s.) Lovecraft's attendance at the Boston NAPA convention in July 1930 seems to have reawakened his interest in the hobby and he served on the critics' bureau in 1931-35, as chair (first appointed by Harold Segal) for the final two years. His service to NAPA was capped by a term on the board of executive judges in 1935-36. The judges were kept busy that year, adjudicating complaints filed by Edwin Hadley Smith concerning the laureate awards and the printing of the award certificates, and assisting the beleaguered 1935-36 president, Hyman Bradofsky.

The reader with the fortitude to read through the 440 pages of the first volume of Collected Essays will gain a detailed picture of Lovecraft's involvement in the hobby which he wrote provided him “life itself” after his hermit existence in 1908-13. This volume will provide essential source material for researcher who eventually undertakes to write the survey of Lovecraft's career as an amateur journalist. Fossils Mike Horvat and Vic Moitoret provided essential help to editor S. T. Joshi in assembling the material for this collection. Early United material in particular is scarce as the proverbial “hen's teeth,” and in fact a few items, such as British wartime amateur journals Spindrift (Ernest Lionel McKeag, editor) and Little Budget of Knowledge and Nonsense have so far eluded even Joshi's intensive search.

The essays have been immaculately edited and annotated by S. T. Joshi, with assistance from David E. Schultz. Hippocampus Press (Derrick Hussey, publisher) is producing the Collected Essays in both hardcover and economical paperback formats. Hippocampus Press can be reached at P.O. Box 641, New York, NY 10156 or through its website http://www.hippocampuspress.com.

ERNEST LIONEL McKEAG

Collected Essays 1 (see foregoing review) tells us that Lovecraft's lost serial “The Mystery of Murdon Grange” actually began as a round-robin story in Lieut. McKeag's amateur magazine Spindrift, which he produced, amazingly, while in active military service. Lovecraft remained in correspondence with McKeag through at least 1921-22, when the latter was in Germany in training as a journalist and circulating the first number of his amateur manuscript magazine Northumbrian. (The high cost of printing during and after World War I forced many amateurs to resort to manuscript or carbon-copy magazines passed on from one member to the next on a circulation list. Obviously, such magazines were subject to perils along the distribution chain and Lovecraft's own segment of “The Mystery of Murdon Grange” appears to have fallen victim to the loss of his own manuscript magazine Hesperia before it had even completed its circulation to New England amateurs in 1918.) McKeag later became a prolific writer and editor of juvenile fiction, with a number of books to his credit under various pseudonyms including Roland Vane and John King. We was editor of The Schoolgirls' Own Library as late as 1951-61.

Today, even the great Moitoret collection of amateur journalism does not contain any example of McKeag's Spindrift. But Vic Moitoret sends this interesting note concerning Ernest Lionel McKeag:

“I was particularly pleased to read the info. on Ernest McKeag. We met him in London when he came over from Eire to attend a BAPA convention—a spry old man with a cheery face and a pleasant manner.”

MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

Submitted by Martha E. Shivvers,
Membership Chair

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2004-2005

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