

The
National
Amateur



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President's Message

I've been listening to a great series of recorded books on The Giants of Philosophy narrated by Charlton Heston. I listened to Aristotle on my drive to Denver over the Thanksgiving holiday where I got to visit our members Tom Parson, Elaine Peck and Ronald Young in addition to my son David and his family.

I'm now listening to the reading of St. Thomas Aquinas and can't get over how much knowledge these great thinkers gained with only the use of a straight edge and compass and, of course, their great reasoning powers. This was all before the advent of printing and I am so grateful for the scribes who recorded it all. One of the thoughts was that nothing moves unless something moves it.

It made me think of how Elaine Peck, who, in spite of her paralysis and confines to a wheelchair entertained me by playing tapes her daughter had made for her and showed me a number of publications she had played a part in or loved because they were so inspirational. What moves her is her determination to continue being an active member of our Association. I'm sure there are others like her in our hobby who I'm not familiar with and I admire them immensely I haven't learned from these great thinkers how to *move* our membership to become more active in writing and publishing more material for our bundle or how to increase our membership. We would all benefit from these things.

Our Team 125 continue to keep our association on track and hope you have been enjoying their efforts. We have much to look forward to from plans our 2001 convention committee are firming up and we all have a new year to enjoy.

I close with Henry Lewis Bullen's *An Inspiration for the Coming Year*:

"This year let me create a piece of printing—a book, a broadside, anything in preservable form—that will embody my best knowledge of my art of typography, a work of my own and of my helpers, with no thought but to make it worthy of the art I practice and an honor to myself, a work the library of my own town will treasure as a local achievement, preferably relating to my own town; a work which in covers or in a frame my children will cherish lovingly in memory of me; a work to be studiously and leisurely for no profit but the greater one of pleasure in my work"

My love to you with wishes for your health and happiness in the New Year.

Bob Mills

The National Amateur

Official Journal of the
National Amateur Press Association



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Anyone interested in the hobby, upon endorsement by a present member, will be considered for membership. This includes a subscription to *The National Amateur*, and entitles a member to participate in association affairs.

Active members are qualified to vote in the annual election of officers held at the annual convention. An active member may also participate in the annual laureate competition and use the mailing bureau and the manuscript bureau.

Dues are \$20 for U.S. members. For members outside U.S.: bundles sent surface mail, \$27.50; Europe air mail, \$50; Far East air mail, \$60.

Additional members of the same household may join for \$2 annually, but only one copy of the official organ and the bundle will be sent to this household.

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An Avocation to Prize

by Gale Sheldon

Editor's Note: *This autobiographical piece, Gale's Banquet Address from the 1999 Convention, seemed to be the best way to allow Gale to say his own goodbyes. It was previously published in The Boxwooder 364 and excerpts were published in Silver & Gold 32.*

HOW IT ALL BEGAN:

When I was ten years old I published my first paper. I had discovered sports, particularly baseball. Somehow I had decided it would be fun to publish my own newspaper. So I got out some typing paper and proceeded, via the hunt-and-peck method on my folks' aging Remington typewriter, to produce a single-page, newspaper-looking sheet. No doubt I had been influenced by a Big Little Book titled, *Mickey Mouse Runs His Own Newspaper*, which I had gotten in a trade at school. But there was absolutely nothing I could do with a single copy of out-of-date baseball news on a sheet which resembled the sports page of the daily paper. So ended my first publication. Nevertheless the dream lived on.

THE KUNA HERALD:

One day the following year I was returning from the post office and walked by the grimy window of the building where the weekly newspaper, *The Kuna Herald*, was published. I could see part of a huge platen press rather dimly through the dirty glass. Excitedly, I hurried home and told my mother what I had seen. That night I asked my parents if I could go inside and get a closer view of the printing. They said I should go in and ask the publisher, Mr. P. J. Gregory, if that would be all right.

On the following Thursday I went inside and asked Mr. Gregory if I could watch him print the paper. He said, "Yes, as long as you

don't touch anything." It was a wonderful old office, a bit dusty, with what must have been a huge 14 by 22 platen press chomping away as a page of the paper was being printed. The inside six pages were pre-printed in Salt Lake City and shipped in every week. So Mr. Gregory printed the first and last pages.

One day when I stopped in to see what was going on, the publisher was running out a set of mats from the Linotype and replacing them with a different font for some job work. It was obviously a single magazine machine. His mats were in poor shape, had hairlines in abundance, and generally did not print well. But he used what he had. Once I remember him taking out the chase as he was printing a page of the paper and beating down a slug which worked up, without unlocking the quoins!

And the smell of the job black ink! To me it became the main part of the atmosphere at the *Herald* shop. My first Kelsey ink was job black and had the same exotic smell. Years later when I returned to printing, I discovered this wonderful ink had been replaced and no black ink has smelled right since.

DELIVERING PAPERS AND MY FIRST PRESS:

For a while I carried the old *Boise Capital News* paper in Kuna. Then it was bought by the *Idaho Daily Statesman* and my brother and I together ran that route, each delivering half of the daily papers. On the basis of our good record, the circulation manager got me a job carrying complaint papers in Boise one sum-

mer. The next summer my brother and I were both hired as mail room helpers, he for the night shift and I for the day. We ran off daily mailing lists on an old Niles proof press.

Upon reading old copies of *Popular Mechanics* magazine I found ads for small printing presses, including the Kelsey. They aimed their ads at the novice as a quick way to become a money-making printer. So in the fall of 1942 I ordered a 3 by 5 Kelsey and enough type, leads, slugs, and equipment to get started. I also learned a bit about democracy. World War II was on, and the government could not suspend the production of printing equipment because it would restrict our freedom of the press.

The Kelsey Company published a *Printer's Guide* which was sent out with each press purchased, and they regularly published a four-page paper titled *The Printer's Helper*, with all kinds of hints on how to improve your printing. Along with an issue of this paper in 1947 were notices from two amateur press organizations, the NAPA and AAPA, and I joined both. After a year I dropped the AAPA membership because their papers were mostly mimeographed. Here were just the kinds of people I had been looking for—folks who were actually publishing papers! Within a year I had published a couple of four-page papers on my 3x5 Kelsey. The publishing hobby had bit me and there was no cure.

A MANY-FACETED INSTITUTION:

This evening I want to express my gratitude for this many-sided institution of amateur journalism. Into this microcosm of society, I came with the energy and vigor of youth and discovered one of the rich adventures of my life. Although my amateur activity was non-existent during the years of schooling, starting a family, and building a house, it never occurred to me to drop my membership. I always knew I would be back.

Amateur journalism has brought me new and valued friendships. With great interest and enthusiasm I heeded the call from Glenn Engebretsen in Los Angeles and went to a gathering of amateurs there in March, 1971. Here a whole group of amateurs were opened up to me, and I became good friends with many of them.

With interests in common, you have something to be friends about. While sometimes is heard a discouraging word, little actual discouragement seems to result. Once in a while, we have some touchy and contentious individuals, but only rarely does any actual disagreement result in long-standing acrimony. It is the institution of amateur journalism which has supplied the incentive and framework for producing my own journal, *Silver & Gold*, with all the adjuncts which an organization of like-minded individuals can provide.

A PLACE IN THE SUN:

Frederick Folger Thomas, who insisted in his essay of 1956, "While Still There's Time," that he was a marginal character in amateur journalism because all he did was to publish nearly 500 pages of his journal, *Far Afield*, in 17 issues. But he did not take part in office-holding, or convention attending, or any of the other tasks required to keep a hobby organization alive and kicking. He was content to let the younger crowd attend to these political and organizational activities. He believed they should not devolve upon the old-timers.

Unlike Fred Thomas, I have taken part in the operation of NAPA West and have always had at least one item in each issue of its journal. NAPA San Diego was reorganized in 1984 following the San Diego convention, and both groups and their journals continue. I have been engaged in the politics of NAPA during the past quarter century. Any member who loves the activity of NAPA and its members must feel a responsibility to do what he can to foster the growth and success of the group. You pay your real dues when you accept a task for the good of the organization.

WHAT SHOULD AMATEURS WRITE ABOUT?

The criticism of amateur writing that it should dare to concern itself with any subject matter other than amateur journalism itself is a ridiculous notion that does not belong in our organization. Should it prevail, that would be the death of the hobby itself. And those who write wholly for pleasure, whether or not they

are members of an association, should not be ignored or ostracized by the organization. What editor worth his salt would use writing only from a member if he had something better from a non-member?

W. Paul Cook, who published *The Ghost*, once editorialized that all are amateur papers if they are published without hope of reward, either in cash or appreciation. The amateur is the only publisher who can be indifferent to readership. He has no customers, no advertisers, no subscribers. Except for his contributors, he has no one to please but himself. The degree to which his publication can bring him satisfaction, the degree to which it may appeal to the readers to whom he would cater, will vary with the material he is able to round up and its merit as writing.

OUR ORNAMENTS:

For fortunate persons with the facility, application, or promise, and with something to say, it is writing that offers the highest aims and the most significant of all the opportunities of amateur journalism. It is not the chit-chat, reports, minutes-keeping, or special pleading for or against issues, causes, or movements. I refer to verse, short fiction, criticism, essays, in those unfenced fields, the humanities: in short, the most exacting of all these diversions. It is mental work—the hardest kind of labor. It requires observation, sensitivity to impressions, some command of the language, a broad sympathetic outlook, good humor, and calm temper.

Relatively few members are up to it, but there are a few and they are our ornaments... So wrote Fred Thompson. They are the most to be admired, the most valuable in giving amateur journalism whatever distinction it can claim. They are the most to be envied. For creative writing that really comes across gives its creator a sustained and exalted excitement not found elsewhere in our varied activities.

The preference for me is the opportunity to dabble in the whole range of activities in publishing a paper. I have succeeded only rarely in some of its facets. Being a part of the whole picture, from the written word to shipping the completed papers to the mailer, this is the

aspect of amateur journalism which has always fascinated me.

OUR ILLUSIONS:

If we are to survive for long we must be generous to and receive favorably all efforts to produce verse, short fiction, criticism, essays, the humanities: in essence Amateur Letters. It would be unreasonable to expect the average to be a whole lot better than average. The writer of exceptional ability is still the exception. So long as we have ten or a dozen writers of real ability, we have support for our moderate literary pretensions, the laureate contests and the rest.

In his celebrated "Deathbed Masterpiece, The Grand Illusion," Ernest Edkins disavowed a lifetime of work in the field of Amateur Letters which he and Tim Thrift had committed themselves to throughout long amateur careers. In this engaging and provocatively written "about-face" he denied the very things he had been toiling with for a lifetime in the hobby. Fred Thomas attributed this famous flip-flop to a revulsion against the pretentiousness of *The Aonian* name and the banner which proclaimed: "Devoted to Literature, Criticism and the Preservation of Amateur Letters."

Fortunately amateur journalism endures with an energy not easily dismissed. With seemingly inexhaustible ability to absorb adverse criticism, it goes on, quite as before. It admires our fine writers, such as Edkins and others, past and present. It had been wise for us to cherish, grandly, its Grand Illusion, if that is what it is. For if we jettison our illusions, then we are indeed shipwrecked.



A Long-time Treasured Friend

A week after “that phone call” about NAPA’s sudden, mammoth loss of Gale shattered my world, I dug through my correspondence file and withdrew a sheaf of letters from Gale. He and I carried on a long-distance exchange for decades. At more than a dozen conventions, Gale became an even closer friend.

In earlier days, Gale was living on A Street in San Diego, before he and Ruth settled in El Cajon. A few excerpts from his letters may interpret why he and I shared similar values and background.

“When I was seven years old, my Dad and uncle milked about a dozen or so cows. I got paid a cent per night for holding the cow’s tail while they did the milking. Nothing like getting whacked in the face with a wet cow’s tail that had been dragged through the gutter.

“Closest thing I ever came to golf was trapping gophers that were digging holes all over the stump ranch in North Idaho when I was about six. God a penny a gopher for every tail I brought in. My first savings account!”

“Drivers here just never learned that you must slow down when it’s raining. I lived for two years in Eugene, Oregon, going to the U of O and also worked there in 1951 before Uncle Sam asked me back into his forces. I learned to be ver-r-r-y careful on wet pavement.”

“Seems like life is becoming one visit to the Docs after another, and one funeral after another. Tom Woodard died (4-98) so Ruth and I hustled up to Northridge to attend the funeral. We, took Dorothy Hutchinson with us and we were the only ajayers who attended. Tom was one of the older ones in our group, but not much older than we are! He was 80. Died quickly, was only ill for a day or two. For my money, that’s the way to bow out.

Gale’s superb craftsmanship as a printer-editor needs no further review than his impressive collection of laureates for his *Silver & Gold*. I was most impressed when he published a 191-page book of stories of his Uncle Don’s homesteading years in the rural North-

west. With only one case of Century, Gale could set only 3½ pages at a time; print one page at a time on an 8x12 platen press; distribute the type back into the case and repeat the process. Name me one person in this Jet Age who would finish such a project. Gale gifted me a signed copy.

I suspect the rollers on Gale’s Heidelberg were always wet with ink. He was a devoted and generous letterpress whiz. I doubt the void he leaves in NAPA will ever be refilled.

—Fred H. Gage

With Respect And Love

I wept when I heard the news that Gale had passed away. That might at first seem like a surprising reaction regarding a person who I had only met four or five times. But this wasn’t just anyone; this was, after all, Gale Sheldon.

I am a rather recent member of NAPA; I just joined in 1995, at the Greenbelt convention. That was therefore also the first time that I met Gale. His printing knowledge was legendary, and so it was always interesting to talk with him about printing matters. But much more than that, he was the sort of person who made a powerful impression, not just by what he said, but also by his presence: his gentle humor, his judgements, his sensitivities, and even just the way he listened to others. He was truly a gentleman. He quickly became a friend to anyone who took the time to visit with him.

My main reason for coming to the annual NAPA conventions has always been to visit with the various people who come each year it’s a great group. And certainly one of those who I especially looked forward to seeing each year was Gale. I am honored to have known him. His knowledge and friendship will always be a part of NAPA, but I will sorely miss the quiet, thoughtful sincerity of everybody’s friend, Gale Sheldon.

—Jon McGrew



Napa West Will Never Be The Same

Gale Sheldon passed away Sept. 2, 2000 after suffering a major stroke. I personally lost my best friend—NAPA West lost the man who kept things moving. He was a teacher, mentor, people mover and an excellent printer. His print shop was always neat and clean and many jobs and journals were printed there. Many NAPA West and NAPA San Diego meetings were held in the shop. I personally was involved when Gale tried a Linotype and became disenchanted with the machine. I tried to keep it going for him but it got the best of him. Some of the best times I remember at the Sheldon home was when Gale became the NAPA mailer. After trying to do it himself, he hollered for help and the San Diego gang responded gladly. I traveled from Hemet for the two years he was mailer and we had the best of fellowship while we collated journals for the bundles. I have many happy memories of Gale and Ruth and the happy times at the Sheldon home.

—Bill Gordon

One Less Christmas Card This Year

Alas, but the annual Christmas card keepsake from Gale and Ruth Sheldon won't pop into my mailbox this year as it has for the last several decades. I have saved all of them. Why? They continue to remind me of a great friend of forty-four years in the hobby.

Gale and I joined the NAPA about the same time, and a family trip to San Diego in 1956 meant an opportunity to visit Gale and member Olive Read there. Gale's sturdy 3x5 Kelsey churned out the obligatory flimsy paper for the bundle, and a friendship was struck.

We saw each other at conventions, and Gale and Ruth ever motored through Cheyenne one year. I kept reading his *Silver & Gold* essays about his family, his memories of Scouting, and his curiosity about everyone and everything. NAPA West journals were always a delight.

Gale looked so, so tired at the Las Vegas convention. But he managed to print and distribute the convention newspapers, one of which was done on that same 3x5 press.

—30— *fond friend,*

—Stan Oliner

A Special Man

One of my earliest recollections of Gale Sheldon took place at my first St. Petersburg beach convention in 1973. Gale took my left-over and auction money home with him to host a San Diego convention the very next year.

Gale was back in St. Petersburg in 1982 when I was host as president and Gale used that occasion to take me and my wife and several others to an *EARLY MORNING BREAKFAST* at a place he had discovered down the beach.

At the centennial convention in 1976 in Philadelphia we both had young sons along and gave them \$5 each to take a sight-seeing bus tour.

At Macon last year Gale and I were the earliest risers for breakfast in a hotel dining room not prepared to feed such early guests.

At Las Vegas Gale sat at the Fossil luncheon table opening and counting Fossil ballots. He looked tired.

How can we possibly replace him? Indeed, a very special man.

—Jack Bond

The logo features the words "SILVER" and "GOLD" in a bold, serif font, with a stylized ampersand "&" between them. The text is set against a light yellow background with a thin black border.

Gale Sheldon was always looking for ways to change the constitution to improve the functioning of NAPA. The nominating committee and the new method of electing executive judges were his long-time plans. On the latter we had considerable correspondence and discussion before we agreed on the version that is now the official amendment. Any disagreement was always in good humor because we respected each other's opinions and goals. His loss will be felt by the association.

The worse loss is the personal one. Leah and I had known Gale for about thirty years. We had visited his home and he had visited ours. He was one of the small circle of friends that we were delighted to see at every convention. He will be missed.

—Jake Warner

Gale Sheldon—Farewell

The sad news came this afternoon from NAPA President Mills. Gale Sheldon had passed away this Labor Day holiday. Gale was at first one more acquaintance, a person I was happy to greet at the conventions he regularly attended. Over the years we became friends, and he felt confident that I would accept when he asked me to serve as Official Editor in 1995. How could I refuse one who was always ready to come forward when there was an association job to be done?

This year, in January, I made up for lost time and visited the Golden State for a few days. Though time was short, I called Gale and he and Ruthie had me out to their home one afternoon, even as they were busy with movers underfoot who were loading daughter Sara's furniture for a long trip to her new home in Manhattan. It was a delight to see Gale at work in his own setting in his well organized printshop.

Bob Mills described Gale on the phone as the glue that bound the western members of the NAPA together. Bob was right. Gale was one of the true blue amateur journalists who have been there when they were really needed if the hobby is to continue. We will miss him.

Goodbye, Gale.

—William H. Groveman



Auld Lang Syne

by Robert Burns

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days of auld lang syne?

*For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne;
We'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.*

We twa ha'e run about the braes,
And pu'd the gowans fine;
But we've wander'd mony a weary foot
Sin' auld lang syne.

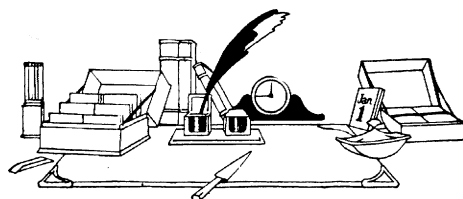
*For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne;
We'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.*

We twa ha'e sported i' the burn
Frae mornin' sun till dine,
But seas between us braid ha'e roared
Sin' auld lang syne.

*For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne;
We'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.*

And here's a hand, my trusty frien',
And gie's a hand o' thine;
We'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

*For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne;
We'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.*



The more things change, the more they stay the same...

Much bitterness has been caused in late years by controversies over different conceptions of amateur journalism. There has been as one extreme the party who claimed the only "pure" amateur journalist was the small boy with the printing press who solicited advertisements to aid him in publishing a small, crude paper. As the opposite extreme may be found a large number who think the "pure" amateur journalist is the person, of whatever amateur age, who publishes his literary efforts without a hint of commercialism. Between these two opposite poles of thought may be found all shades of opinion.

President Davis has clearly set forth what has long been the opinion of some amateur journalists,—that the ideal amateur journalism embraces all these conflicting theories. Consider Amateur Journalism as an immense secret society, if you will. There are many degrees to be taken from the time the novitiate is first admitted to the order, to the time when he has advanced as far as he can go in it. Advocates of any one of the pet theories of amateur journalism would have but one brief initiation and then expel the neophyte. The "boy with the printing press" would be allowed to play he was an amateur until he was sixteen years old and then be requested to withdraw. The dilettante amateur of more mature years would compel a university education and an ability to patter Latin as a credential for admission to the sacred precincts of Amateur Journalism.

The "boy with the printing press" may be considered, if you please, as the first degree of Amateur Journalism. But this "boy" sees above him those who hold other degrees. He advances through different degrees, may spend a lifetime in Amateur Journalism, and yet may always see ahead of him the thirty-third degree, may always have achievements higher than his own to emulate.

Narrowness in a concept of Amateur Journalism injures no one but those who hold the narrow views. They are deliberately missing all the good of the institution, are developing controversial crabbedness which does their better natures no good, are making themselves detested when they should be loved.

—W. Paul Cook, Official Editor, 1919

*Excerpts from Volume 41, Nos. 3, 4 & 6,
January, March & June 1919.*

A Writer's Prayer

BY HENRY VAN DYKE

Lord, let me never tag a moral to a tale, nor tell a story without a meaning. Make me respect my material so much that I dare not slight my work. Help me to deal very honestly with words and with people, for they are both alive. Show me that as in a river, so in writing, clearness is the best quality, and a little that is clear is worth much that is mixed. Teach me to see the local color without being blind to the inner light. Give me an ideal that will stand the strain of weaving into human stuff on the loom of the real. Keep me from caring more for books than for folks, for art than for life. Steady me to do the full stint of work as well as I can; and when that is done, stop me; pay what wages you wilt, and help me to say, from a quiet heart, a grateful Amen.

The Amateur To His Soul

I am an amateur. To me is given the opportunity to tell of things old and new in a style created by the cultivation of distinction in attitude and form.

I am an amateur. To me everything is possible. I know no school, no creed, no master. When I write I write for the love of writing.

In my youth I stood on the heights of great mountains and grew mad with the beauty of the world. Splendid waves of enthusiasm fell back upon me and I heard, far at sea, the moaning of the fanatic, and the treacherous cry of the artist of the Beautiful. I read history through a glass darkly, and saw life through a siren's eye. I was taught that to become great I must worship another's mud idol.

Lies! Lies! Literature is a lie! History is a lie! Even life.

But I am an amateur. The world will never hear of me. I am only an obscure singer. I desire to be known only to my fellows, who, like myself, write for the love of it.

Let us be amateurs!

—Frederic Thoreau Singleton.

In *The Talisman*, June 1896.

Laureate in Poetry



"Past Prime"

by Alvin Fick

On the surface the omniscient teller announces the peonies as "an exercise in the unkempt." With intrigue, readers may simply pick up the flower's thematic title with line one's alliteration as audible hooks catch the eye, the heart and the ear.

So, one may ask, "Who or what is past prime?" An elderly statesperson, an over-the-hill athlete, an aging relative or friend, a disintegrating peony or an outdated, out-of-vogue poem could be "past prime." Whatever answer(s) one chooses, the opening line reveals a natural characteristic for the peonies and that is "an exercise in the unkempt." As a result one may conclude that "Past Prime" opens simply with an exercise announcement and then closes that exercise with internal rhyme and alliteration echoing "in the garden" as "bald peony knobs wait for the first frost."

Is this all there is? Perhaps so, and all that lies in between is "an exercise in the unkempt," addressing the state of being untidy, or messy, or even uncombed. Perhaps there is a great deal more. I think the latter.

Whichever tack is chosen, the omniscient narrator tweaks personification's poetic wretch. The peonies are "weary" in stanza two, also "drowsy" from days in the sun and heavy-headed like people past their prime. In conjunction with the title, as well as first final line, is a potential intersecting theme that the life of the poem may also be "past prime" as are the peonies and the metaphoric people who have labored so long in the sun with "heads larger than salad plates" now incapable of being held up.

In the forefront of these personified images, drum-struck syllables beat the reader's ears with alliteration, repetitive initial word sounds of w's and d's, h's and l's. This drum roll continuously pounds the senses with emphases reminding the reader that peonies and people is "Past Prime." So, all that we may have here is a title of untidiness, and whatever follows is

already "past prime;" a bald-headed peony knob; all awaiting first frost. But I believe there is more than that.

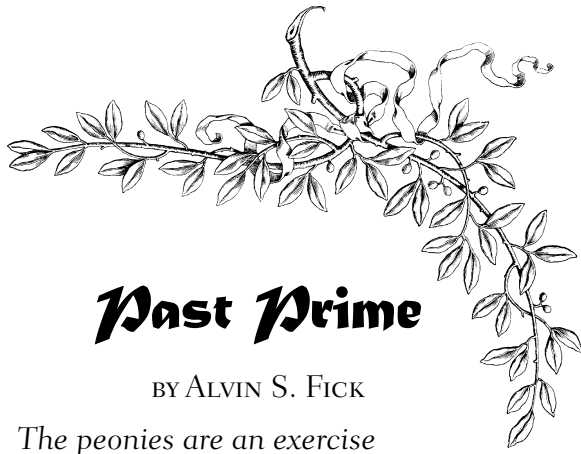
If we stop here we may miss stanzas three, four and five's internal schwa's upside down "e" sounds, mingling with repetitive s's and their ricocheting sounds with vowels and diphthongs' songs while joining along with more alliteration plus consonant repetitions of h's, f's, t's, n's, p's and c's. All this musical lyricalness produces a softer, brush-like stroke across the poem's drum skin's page. Furthermore, a quieter quality of classical-like tunes combine with mellow antebellum jazz-like tones to muffle the noise and messiness of fresh cut flowers snowing pale pink upon "the coffee table and the back of a sleeping cat."

Meanwhile, juxtaposed-ants have been assimilated by peonies personified demise as the ants climb stems outside, wandering "drunkenly through the moist maze of petals." Then they continue on inside as "passengers on the blossoms" where they forage for sugar in the kitchen. Simultaneously, whiskbroom-like strokes sashay across the white, tight, drum-like skin page of "past prime's" poem, peonies and persons.

If all this is the case, and I surmise it is, then we are future unborn personas awaiting conception in the next poem; we are peonies full of next spring's seedlings, we are next generation's seeds of human beings; who all await first frost's natural commencement into the next kingdom's entrance; much like a poem, a flower and a person's passageway extending beyond "past prime," and then transcending first frost with the rebirth of a new poem, a new plant, a new human specimen, resurrecting anew the natural beauty manifest within the everlasting order of every poem, peony and person.

Finally, in conclusion, the poem "Past Prime" does not cease with period's end punctuation nor does the peony or person cease to exist at first frost. The colony in the garden of the sun does live on as the peonies and the persons go beyond life spans as the past earth's prime into the next celebrative millennium.

Exceptionally and beautifully created, Al. Congratulations.



Past Prime

BY ALVIN S. FICK

*The peonies are an exercise
in the unkempt.*

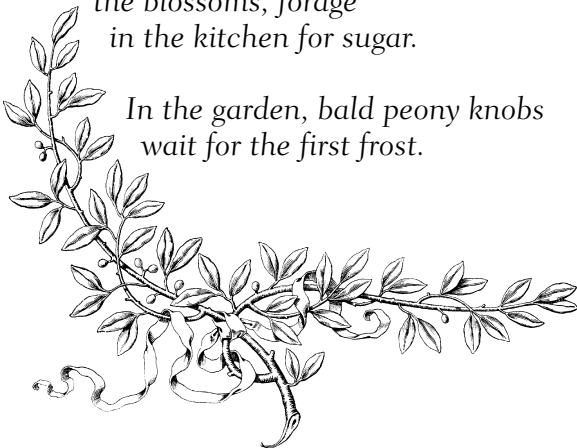
*Weary from drenching the air
with perfume, drowsy from
days in the sun, no longer
can they hold up heads larger
than salad plates.*

*Ants climb stems curved
down by the weight of excess.
They wander drunkenly through
the moist maze of petals.*

*In the house a vase of flowers,
scarcely an hour from cutting,
snows pale pink on the coffee table
and the back of a sleeping cat.*

*A few ants, passengers on
the blossoms, forage
in the kitchen for sugar.*

*In the garden, bald peony knobs
wait for the first frost.*



Honorable Mention for Poetry

"The Old Rag Rug"

by Dorothy MacAulay

This five stanza poem portrays vivid images marked by end rhyme. This reinforces and heightens the boundaries of the age-old custom of weaving words and remnants of clothing into contemporary usage, whether in a lyrical poem or a practical form, an old rag rug.

The creator's narrator, represented in the persona "I know their stories well," is intimately familiar with the relatives' tales.

Thus the reader participates like a house guest throughout the narrator's introduction. Colorful characters emerge as remnants of yesteryear interwoven with nostalgic tones of endearment, pride, love and humor as "Grandpa's overalls" march "round the edge, in sombre black."

The narrator subconsciously or serendipity-like invites the reader to recollect beneath one's own feet the tales their own "rags" tell. In other words, what dress and braid; what colorful grandmother and little girl's pinafore adorn another's creation? What old rag rug will the reader create? Will a bride's creamy satin gown make it to the weaving floor of one's own mind? Will twin sisters' pearly gray dresses coincide with similar threads of twin rag dolls? As a result, this open-minded, end-rhymed poem invites house guests to assimilate and become "poemed" with the extended family, imagined in the "old rag rug upon the floor."

Of course the tales are not all told nor every slip of cloth woven in like metaphors. This "old rag rug upon the floor" is the musical springboard of the lyrical mind that will grow immeasurably with each welcomed visitor to this fine poem, this fond home. Well done, Dorothy!

1999 POETRY LAUREATE JUDGE:

Roland Eric Boys

California Poet

Oxnard College

Laureate Award for Fiction

“Over the Rainbow”

by Dorothy MacAulay

(*Silver & Gold* #31, September 1999).

“Strong sense of atmosphere / careful attention to implicative detail / surprising ending that delights & forces the reader back over the story—imaginative & provocative.”

HONORABLE MENTION:

“The Bargain”

by Betty Simmons,

(*The Boxwooder* #363, October 1999).

“An emotional lure / poignant & tender / powerful psychological presence.”



Over the Rainbow

by Dorothy MacAulay



TODAY I visited my favorite haunt—Giovanni’s Antique Emporium. Housed in century-old stone building in the old business section of our city, this piece of the past, with its dusty treasures, never fails to fascinate me.

Giovanni knows me well, for haven’t I been his customer for years? As I enter, he looks up, drops the tool he has been using to refurbish another piece of fine furniture and greets me joyously.

“Where you been?” he asks with a courtly air, while his dark eyes shine a welcome. He reminds me of one of Cæsar’s men—tall, heavy set, his regal bearing complemented by a crown of thick, silvery curls. Mentally, I dress him in a toga and place laurel leaves in his hair. His handsomeness increases and he looks more youthful today than before. Except for his assistant, Mavis (a fox terrier) Giovanni

works alone. I wonder about his private life. Is he married? Does he have a lover? He comes across as a man who has lost much but still has much to give.

I explain that I have been too busy to visit him lately but have longed for this moment.

“Make yourself at home,” he says, “I’ll be right here if you need me.”

He goes on with his work as I turn to explore his Eldorado of antiques.

I admire a swing set, full-length mirror which accompanies a hand-carved mahogany bedroom suite. In the mirror’s reflection I see Mavis standing behind me. There is something different about her today. She is wearing a mauve neckerchief. I know she is the apple of his eye, but I can’t imagine Giovanni dolling her up like this.

As I turn to speak to her, I realize that not only Mavis, but the whole place has

undergo a transformation. The wall have been painted light blue and are graced with pastoral scenes in every one of which there is a rainbow.

Looking about with new eyes, I did notice the furniture is no longer dusty and crowded together. Dining room suites are polished and set up invitingly with flowers on tables and sideboards. Some tables, dressed with linens and fine china are so inviting as to set my salivary glands working overtime. An imaginary roast beef dinner titillates my nostrils.

Then she comes in the door carrying two cups of coffee from the nearby delicatessen. With paroxysms of delight, Mavis welcomes her.

In a pleasing foreign accent she sings a bright hello to me, adding, "I'll be with you in just a moment."

Through the door to the adjoining room, I see a smiling Giovanni turn from his work to greet her. Rising on tip-toe she hands him his coffee, plants a kiss on his lined cheek, and rubs her golden head against his silver and they seem enchanted.

"I'll be back soon," she promises, turns, and strides toward me, graceful, tall and slim as any fashion model.

In a charming manner, she offers her beautiful hand and informs me she is Golda—Mrs. Giovanni.

"I didn't think he was married!" I blurt out.

She laughs.

"We were recently married—in Amsterdam," she replies. "He came into my art shop one day and we immediately fell in love. I am an artist and have been doing some rearranging and decorating in our shop. Do you like it?"

Enthusiastically, I answer, "Yes!"

She takes me on a conducted tour. There

are many new acquisitions, among them a curio cabinet in which I express interest.

Immediately, she opens the cabinet and begins to describe the storied contents one by one.

"This," she tells me, removing a porcelain object (flat, the size of a man's pocket watch and having a hand painted floral pattern on its surface) "is a Chinese tear jar. They were used at funerals. Mourners caught their tears on this tiny spoon at the tip of the stopper, deposited them in the jar and left it beside the deceased to prove their sorrow."

Lifting a slim, cut glass bottle the size of a man's middle finger, she unscrews its top and holds it to my nostrils. This, she informs me, is a Bosom Bottle, which ladies of long ago carried in their cleavage. Forerunners of today's deodorants, Bosom Bottles were somewhat less effective.

Knowledgeable about antiques, Golda has a graciousness about her that complements the quality of the many lovely things in the shop. I wish I could stay longer, but my lunch hour is almost up. I leave, promising (and determined) to return again—soon.

Outside the shop I look up at a new sign. The old one, "Giovanni's Antique Emporium" has been replaced with "Over the Rainbow."

That is where Golda has put the shop—and Giovanni.



1999 FICTION LAUREATE JUDGE

Michael Adams

Professor of English

The University of Texas at Austin;

author of two published novels.

Laureate Award for Miscellaneous Prose

“Dining at the Sunflower Cafe”

by Alvin S. Fick

(NAPA West #57, Spring 1999)

All of the entries for Miscellaneous Prose were well written, interesting pieces. I read them all several times and narrowed it down to six. The next four were really hard to eliminate. I wish I could bestow extra honorable mentions, but I understand that is not acceptable.

I looked for reflection, outstanding descriptive detail, research, (when called for), mood, organization and holding reader interest from start to finish.

I award the laureate prize to Alvin S. Fick for *Dining At The Sunflower Cafe* published in #57 Spring issue of NAPA West.

The subtlety of the title can only be appreciated by reading the entire drama of a praying mantis slowly ingesting a bumblebee on a sunflower in the author's back yard. On first reading the subject gave me indigestion, but his descriptive similes stayed with me: “The mantis's head pivoted back and forth as it fed like a person eating corn on the cob.”

He acknowledged nature taking its course succinctly by pointing out the scene differed only in scale and locale from a lioness waiting beside a water hole for an unsuspecting zebra. Somehow I couldn't stop thinking about Alvin's depiction of a natural, albeit unappetizing, phenomenon. Other camouflaged meanings and truths bombarded my mind as an aftermath of reading his prose. Maybe he didn't purposely inject these allegorical messages but they pushed my mind as an aftermath of reading his prose. Maybe he didn't purposely inject these allegorical messages but they pushed my imagination beyond the written words long after I dismissed the other entries. An impact like that on even one person, seems deserving to me of the Laureate Award.

HONORABLE MENTION goes to LINDA JEAN FOSTER for *SQUIRREL MOM* printed in Tracks #9, Jan. 1999. I felt as if I were with

Laureate Award for Printing

Silver & Gold 31

by GALE SHELDON

Silver & Gold 31 receives the Laureate Awards in Printing based on quality of presswork, pleasing proportions, and overall design.

HONORABLE MENTION

Pixel Jockey 3 receives Honorable Mention based on innovative design, use of color illustrations, and quality of printing.



1999 PRINTING LAUREATE
JUDGE

Laurence Hines

her every step as she nursed an orphaned baby tree squirrel back to life with love, patience and time consuming care. I felt emotionally caught up in her resolve to save a tiny life. Her personality and love of the wilderness shone throughout her work. Her descriptions were vivid: “It lay like a little gray doughnut, fuzz starting to cover the skin, curled in my vest on the floor.”

I cannot end without saying how much I enjoyed the late Gale Sheldon's reflections on how he became interested in printing and NAPA. We only corresponded twice, and I felt I knew him so much better after reading the reminiscences in his entry. He was so important to NAPA. He will be missed and long remembered.

I also remain in awe of Jake Warner's mathematical acumen. The logical side of my brain never caught up to my creative side.



1999 MISCELLANEOUS PROSE
LAUREATE JUDGE

Betty Simmons

Dining at the Sunflower Café

by Alvin S. Fick



IT IS LATE AUGUST. The seven or eight sunflowers we started in pots last spring stand tall, some with heads so large and heavy they can no longer turn their deep golden faces to the sun. In the flower bed bordering the front porch four of the sun worshippers have been visited by bees throughout the day since the opening of the blossoms. The heavily laden seed heads are eight to ten inches in diameter and droop so their faces are turned to earth. They look as if they are admiring the petunias and zinnias blooming around their feet.

The huge leaves begin to show the wear of the advancing season, with an occasional small hole as evidence of a foraging but disappointed insect. The sandpapery feel of the leaves discourages such encroachment. The yellow gold of the petals—one of nature's richest glowing colors—are shriveling, drying and falling. They have served their purpose: to attract bees and other pollinators.

In the back yard two of the tallest still manage to hold their faces parallel to the sturdy tree-like stems. I'm not sure why their development has been the slowest, yet they are the tallest. The seed heads, still ringed by a lion's mane of petals, are smaller, measuring six inches across.

Yesterday I asked Alma to come out and stand beside them for scale while I took a picture, to show friends that one of these sequoias stood nearly eight feet tall. After two or three snapshots, my wife looked into the face of one of the plants and said, "There's a praying mantis." Clinging to the petals and the edge of the seed head was a praying mantis (family Mantidae), its color a green that was an exact match to the leaves of the plant. It was four

inches long—a large one. "I'm going into the house for another camera so I can focus closer," I said. When I returned with the camera I heard her exclaim, "Look—it has a bee!"

The mantis now clutched a bumblebee (genus *Bombus*) in its stout spiny forelegs. As I framed the scene in the viewfinder I could see the bee struggling, and the mantis, its prayers answered, already beginning to consume its prey. As the drama unfolded the bee continued to struggle in vain. The mantis's head pivoted back and forth as it fed, like a person eating corn on the cob. We went into the house to let nature continue her inexorable pattern without interference.

A half hour later I went into the yard again.

The drama was nearly over. All that remained of the bumblebee were the wings and a small part of the nether end of the fuzzy yellow abdomen. The praying mantis was still feeding.

This morning when I checked, the mantis was gone. On a large leaf just below the flower head were wings, black legs, and some tiny black chitinous parts of the bumblebee I could not identify—its feet perhaps. Waste not, want not. As I stood there the thought occurred to me that the scene had differed only in scale and locale from a lioness waiting beside a water hole for an unsuspecting zebra. The inclination to interfere and rescue the unfortunate victim is a human trait that should not be heeded.

By noon the mantis had returned to the same sunflower and assumed its prayerful stance, waiting for lunch to be served. I looked closely and wondered if it might be a female. The abdomen seemed large and distended. Perhaps not all its girth is owed to a healthy diet.



Laureate: History Of Amateur Journalism

SUBMISSIONS:

"An Avocation to Prize,"

Gale Sheldon in *Boxwooder* 364

"Thirty Years of NAPA and *Boxwooder*."

Jacob Warner in *Boxwooder* 360

"Macon II: Convention 124,"

Jacob Warner in *Boxwooder* 361.

"Four Decades of OH! OH!s on the O.O."

Ralph Babcock

"Decline and Rebirth of NAPA." 1930,

Ralph Babcock

"Laureate Leader for Ladies, The Marionette"

Ralph Babcock

"Our Ex-Presidents," Ralph Babcock.

This is a difficult decision. The three writers are good friends and I should excuse myself from this task, but I agreed to do it because of stressful circumstances at Las Vegas and I wanted to help the newly elected president.

The four items submitted by Ralph Babcock had to be dismissed because they originally did

not appear in 1999. Ralph is a great historian and has a remarkable memory along with a host of reference material. I believe a Special Award for A.J. History should be given him.

I would award Honorable Mention to Gale Sheldon, who wrote of his amateur journalism years. Told in straightforward language, his love for the hobby is easily discernible.

The Laureate Award goes to Jacob Warner for 30 Years of NAPA and *Boxwooder*, giving him the highest honor for delineating 30 years of printing a monthly publication, along with his annual convention summaries, supplementing in detail the official minutes. Mr. Warner does much work behind the scenes that are deserving of more than laureates, and while that does not enter in this scope, it is a good way here and now to express our appreciation.



1999 HISTORY LAUREATE
JUDGE
Harold Segal

LAUREATE REMINDER

BY THE ASSISTANT RECORDER, A. WALRUS

"*The time has come,*" the Walrus said,

"To hit some nails upon the head.

Go through the journals, mark the best,

And send them off for the laureate test."

Notice I said "the" not "your" journals. That means with the writer's or publisher's consent, you may submit all publications you believe are worthy of consideration. Naturally I hope false modesty or fear of rejection will not keep you from entering your own work.

The categories are miscellaneous prose, fiction, poetry, editorial comment, editing (three editions of the same paper), printing, art, history of amateur journalism. Write on each entry the name of its category. If the article is one of

several in the journal, put the page number as well as the category on the cover, and also show the category on the article itself. If several articles in the same journal go to the same judge, one copy will suffice, but each article still needs to be identified.

All entries must have been published by a member during the year 2000. They must be received by the Recorder between January 1 and March 15, 2001. The Recorder will forward them to the President who will turn them over to the judges he has lined up. If you wish to withdraw an article or alter its category, notify the President.

The Recorder is Louise Lincoln, 1429 S. Park Lane, Tucson, Arizona 85710.

THIRTY YEARS OF NAPA AND *Boxwooder*



by Jacob L. Warner

CAN IT POSSIBLY be thirty years since I joined NAPA? Thirty years since I nervously sent *Boxwooder* No. 1 to the Mailer? On the one hand it seems a lifetime ago and on the other only yesterday.

Son David and I had spent three or four years learning about printing mainly from books and trial and error with plenty of the latter. It now seems peculiar that it was difficult to lock up a form so that nothing fell out when the chase was lifted.

We had never met a hobby printer and barely knew they existed through Ben Lieberman's *Printing as a Hobby*. I was astonished to learn from that book that some people had massive printing presses in their basements along with hundreds of type cases. We read this book and *Printing for Pleasure* by Ryder over and over.

We had acquired a 9x13 Kelsey—a good learning tool if one is hard to discourage because if you can print on this press, you can print on anything. After about a year of effort on the Kelsey we bought a basement printing shop including a 10x15 C&P and had bought a good bit of equipment from local printing plants which were in the process of switching to offset. The mid and late 1960s was probably the best period for acquiring letterpress equipment as the move to offset printing was accelerating.

A year or so later I mentioned to an acquaintance that I was a hobby printer and he said, "What do you print? It looks to me like you would soon run out of things to print."

I had no good answer for this question. I had been so busy learning to print that it hadn't really occurred to me. By this time David, at the age of eleven or twelve, had established a thriving business printing for a credit union, a theater, and several businesses. I did not want another job so I refused to print for money,

thus, as my acquaintance said, I was running out of things to print.

In late spring of 1969 we received a mailing from Kelsey, the now defunct printing supplies company, which included Bill Murtland's brochure on NAPA. (This was the famous "Kelsey mailing" that brought some 120 new members to NAPA.) "Just look at this," I said to Dave, "Can you believe this?"

I immediately sent in my application and was amazed all over again when I received the first bundle. David quickly joined also. I felt somewhat intimidated by the high quality of the printing and of the writing in many of the journals, but I began planning my first journal and wrote to the Mailer to find out what I had to do to get a journal into the bundle. The Mailer (Virginia Baker, I think) replied, "Just send me 400 copies (or whatever the number was). That's all you have to do; I'll do the rest."

I found the attempt to write the first journal very awkward. Though I had been very interested in writing and journalism when I was in school, I had long since abandoned it and for many years had written nothing but official government letters and scientific reports both of which are antitheses of writing that anyone would read by choice. I had sometimes been mildly criticized because my letters were said to be "perhaps too direct." And upon receiving an invitation to attend a meeting, I would sometimes scrawl on the bottom of the invitation letter: "OK, I'll be there." and toss it into my outbox. My secretary would, however, retrieve it and type a formal letter reply, and the pronoun I would be duly replaced by *the undersigned*, etc. I really wanted to win a Laureate Contest in NAPA to prove to myself that I could write on a par with other members. It took me about three years to win one.

I gave very little thought to naming my journal. After all it would probably amount to only a few issues. We live in a housing development called Boxwood, and we had already used that

name for our press so without much thought the journal received its name.

Writing the *Boxwooder* remained a struggle for a long time. I had decided that quantity of writing was what I needed, and that I would worry about quality later. I achieved half my goal: it gradually became quite easy to write my journal—now my essays or stories often come out to exactly eight or twelve pages—but I never got around to worrying about quality. I know that good writing requires careful editing, revising, and rewriting but I have never been able to bring myself to do much of this.

Soon after my first journal was published I received post cards from J. Ed Newman, Bill Boys, Harold Segal, John Gillick, J. Rolfe Castleman, and other people that I'd never heard of. I did know that J. Ed was President of NAPA. I wasn't much surprised because I didn't know then how rare such a response was. Later I learned that one postcard per ten journals was more normal.

It was in the spring of 1970 that I received a postcard from Bob Williams saying that Dave and I had written that we had never met a hobby printer and that this situation could be remedied if we came to a Virginia Amateur Printers Association (VAPA) at Alan Wheeler's. We did attend this meeting and thus started a long chain of new friends and acquaintances which even now continues to be extended. Dave, Leah, and I then attended the 1971 convention in Marietta, Ohio. Leah and I have attended every convention since that one.

Leah became a family member in 1974. I wanted her to be the first family member, but someone beat her to it, and she was probably the second. She quickly proved the value to NAPA of the newly-established family membership by such services as being Mailer, Recorder, Vice-President, Official Editor, President, and, several times, Executive Judge.

I never had a plan to publish monthly—it just happened. I quickly fell into the habit of spending an hour or two in the print shop every day. I never did actually get an average input time for a journal, but my guess is that about 40 hours of labor is required for an 8-page handset journal. (Another example: It took me about ten years to find out how far my office was from

my home when I was working although I made dozens of attempts—I could never remember to read the odometer on both ends of the trip.)

I started printing the journal on a 10x15 C&P, and although makeready was long and elaborate, the quality of printing was reasonably good. The platen that I had at that time was not flat. I had plans to have it milled to a flat surface but could never get it arranged. Finally I was given another platen which is much flatter but by that time I had switched to the Vandercook SP-15 for printing the journal. I had never even thought of printing the *Boxwooder* on the Vandercook until Harold Segal said that if he had a Vandercook he would print his journal on it. I had a good bit of trouble learning to use the Vandercook and my particular Vandercook had a fault that I could not even make people understand. On a Vandercook when the cylinder reaches the end of its travel it turns on an eccentric axle and the cylinder is lifted slightly so that it does not contact the type on its return journey, but on my press the cylinder would often fail to hold this raised position and would therefore print faintly on the draw sheet on the return trip. Then, of course, it would offset from the platen to the back of the next sheet of paper one printed completely spoiling it. No one seemed to even believe me when I told them about this. Finally one day many years ago I took Harold Segal to the basement to show him what I was complaining about. Try as I might I could not produce this result for him to see. Furthermore it has never happened since that day.

There are so many mysteries to letterpress printing that I do not scrutinize it critically as I am wont to do other things. If throwing salt over my left shoulder would produce better printing, I would simply do it.

The first 252 issues of the *Boxwooder* were handset, but with No. 253 I started using Ventura Publisher to set the journal on my computer and that issue was printed by a professional copy shop. Later computer-set issues were printed offset by Melody and Dave Warner at the Homewood Press or were printed on a Hewlett-Packard LaserJet III. Probably I would have abandoned the journal if the desk-top publishing option had not arisen. Now I hand-

set two to four issues per year and get much pleasure from both methods.

Desk top publishing certainly decreases the labor of publishing a journal. I have had authors submit articles by e-mail and then they go immediately into the publishing program with no intervening paper copy. Many problems arise in the process of computer-set type and often they are extremely baffling and even frustrating, but it is an interesting and challenging process. One has an almost unlimited source of type faces to choose from and, of course, an unlimited number of characters of each face. Further there is no type-wear problem which is the bane of handset letterpress and no type distribution after the journal is printed. The laser printer prints better than I can print on the Vandercook or on the 10x15 C&P. It is still a thrill to see for the first time a printed page of one's journal, but I must admit that the letterpress version gives me the greater pleasure. It may be simply that so much more work has gone into producing the result that I value it more. Rich Hopkins's *ATF Newsletter* is an example. If done by offset, it would be a nice job, by letterpress it is teeth-gnashing astonishing to people who try to print by letterpress. Contrarily, Larry Hines does such superbly designed computer-set journals that *they* are breath-taking. Go figure.

Amateur publishing is undoubtedly a peculiar hobby enjoyed by only a few hundred people. When I told Sivert Sorumgard, the Norwegian graduate student who wrote several biking stories for the *Boxwooder*, about it, he was entranced. "What a wonderful idea," he said. "It must be lots of fun!"

It is often mentioned that the Internet has made it possible for the ordinary person to publish and have a potential audience of millions of people all around the world. It is clear that this is happening and indeed may be one of the factors that is creating difficulties for the associations whose members produce printed journals. Internet publication is relatively effortless and probably quite satisfying to people who have never produced a printed journal. Further, most people do not know that amateur publishing organizations with their built-in readerships are even available; therefore they

know of no way to distribute a printed journal even if they went to the effort to produce one. Internet solves both the production and the distribution problem.

As one accustomed to publishing printed journals to a known audience, publishing on the Internet seems to me to be the near equivalent of posting a journal on a grocery store bulletin board.

To become a published professional writer is a major undertaking generally requiring years of hard work. It requires so much effort that I think one must deeply desire to write to even attempt it. Hobby writing is a different matter, and for hobby writers NAPA is ideal. One has a built-in audience that may be somewhat unresponsive, but now and then one gets a response that warms the heart. Joe Diachenko made a reasonable argument recently in his *Gazebo News* 22 that the only person who reads a journal and agrees with it is its author, but it isn't true. I had as many as three agreeable responses to the very article he was using as a case in point for his argument. But, of course, it doesn't really matter. The real reason I write and publish the *Boxwooder* is that I enjoy doing both activities.

There is no question that NAPA has made a large impression on our lives. Leah and I once sat at a NAPA banquet table where the wife of a member said, in effect, that NAPA had made a human out of her husband. We were amused at the wife's statement, but I must admit that the association has had a major humanizing effect on me as well. In other organizations one may meet and become casually acquainted with many people, but amateur journalism groups are different in that members are in close touch through their journals and we therefore know a lot more about each other than would ever be revealed in casual conversation.

And, of course, in our particular case NAPA's influence has gone far beyond the normal. First it produced a daughter-in-law for us who, in turn, wonderously produced our granddaughter, Alice, who joined NAPA when she was nine-months old at the first Macon convention in 1988 and whose first letterpress activity, as pictured in the *National Amateur*, was teething on a composing stick.



Critique

By Merry Harris

Chairman, Bureau of Critics

September

Boxwooder #374—Jacob Warner, publisher, presents two more tales of the macabre by Merry Harris. These stories and about 38 others were “inspired” by Hyman Bradofsky’s gift of a Lovecraft book. H. P. Lovecraft was an Amateur Journalist in the early part of the 20th century, and preceded Stephen King as Master of the Macabre.

Buckcreek Press #28—Wilson L. Barto, Sr., publisher. An interesting miscellany of prose and poetry. I liked best the publisher’s tribute to his car, mainly because my last (and I mean last) Chevrolet was a total disaster. It konked out the day I bought it, brand-spanking-new. Since then “Chevrolet” has been a dirty word at our house.

Flexible Voice #245—Publisher Robert Orbach records a memory of Gen. George S. Patton, whose language was too colorful to quote.

Iron Horse Extra Edition—Don Bauer, publisher, pays a tribute to the late Gale Sheldon, who died after having suffered a massive stroke. *Vaya con Dios* to a respected and loved A-J-ist.

Old Hat #12—Helena R. Keefe, publisher, extolls the beauty of the Arizona desert when it is blooming. She has discovered, as I did, all about “Jumping Chollas”—a cactus which seems to shoot its spines across vast amounts of space to pinion tenderfoots.

Squawks of Wisdom #5—Robert Nelson, publisher, explains why he does his own whimsical art work.

Squawks of Wisdom #2—Chronologically should precede #5, but surpasses it in size and content. A tour de force of whimsicality. Der Sweet Ol’ Buzzard (Robert F. Nelson) enters a wierd fantasy land with his satire of Lithoo Og Raffy and Pah Latin Raffy, two baboon brothers, engaged in a controversy over which method of printing is superior. I love the Sweet

Ol’ Buzzard’s art work. It adds *zing* to his prose.

Sugar Coated Gall #2—Bud Lesser, publisher, explores “Human population growth and other absurdities.” This is a must-read—especially if you are overly proud of your ancestry. “The history of war tells us,” Lesser reports, “that we are all descendants of victorious rapists and vanquished women; ergo, we are all descendants of bastards. Furthermore, the statistics indicate that there had to be considerable inbreeding, which may explain why we are such crazy bastards.” (Speak for yourself, Bob...) I liked especially the line about the “dinosaur” singing in Bob’s Cupania Tree. Bob has a delightful sense of humor—I hpe to see more of his writing in the bundles. This essay is too delightful to limit to NAPA—I’m photocopying it to send to friends who enjoy this kind of humor, based on cold, hard facts.

(CRITIC’S NOTE: due to my changing physical condition, each critique is written under different circumstances. This time, I’ve taken pain pills and am using a heating pad on my left femur, which has holes in it. I am also hooked up to an oxygen tank. Next time???) (Sounds like *The Perils of Pauline*, doesn’t it? Smiles.)

October

A mixture of August, September & October Journals:

Better Never Than Late Press, Vol. 1 #2, George Chapman, publisher, a promise of more issues to come.

Boxwooder #375—Jacob Warner, publisher, features “The Tallest Lady in the World” by gifted story teller Ann Vrooman. A 7 foot 3 inch woman adds class to a circus, even when barged with grape snow cones, hot dogs and other bigtop delectables.

Campane #202—Harold Segal, publisher, spotlights articles on printing by Ralph Babcock and Ralph D. Howell. Babcock’s “So,

What's a Kittypot?" is based on a single chapter of his proposed 300-plus pages book honoring his father-in-law, Steve Watts. An ambitious undertaking for an over-80 publisher. Howell tells us that "computers have extended the useful life of their compatriots and Bill Gates should be made an honorary member [of AJ groups] because he has helped to add to our organizations. Gale Sheldon is memorialized by Harold, who also comments on Howell's "End of a Printing Era."

Ethnicist #23—Jim Kapplin, publisher, sets up a contest to determine to which amateur organization the "smartest" people belong. Since many people have dual memberships in both NAPA and AAPA, this competition should produce interesting results—especially if by "smart" Jim means "linguistically knowledgeable." There's quite a difference between knowledge and intelligence.

Flexible Voice #246—Robert and Harriette Orbach, publishers. Robert presents a "no room at the inn—or anywhere else" WWII memoir, which many of us wartime brides experienced. Harriette contributes a five line poem, "Memories."

Lake Effect (not numbered)—Arie Koelewyn, publisher, presents a pleasing booklet of short prose and poetry. Writers are Audrey McDonnell, prose, and poets Louisa Flynn Goodlett and Evie Farmer. Poetry is a notch above most amateur offerings.

Shampane #96—Harold Segal & Al Fick, publishers. More serious than most *Shampanes*, this issue concern's Melody Warner's being drafted as *National Amateur* editor upon the unexpected death of Gale Sheldon, and an editorial which begins "many a gay tune can be played on an old violin." It continues: "...the history of the association since its founding in 1876 reveals that storms along the way in the past have been weathered through the steady hands of a few dedicated amateurs taking the helm." The editorial cites the two big enemies of NAPA: an aging membership and apathy.

"Alvold Seck" gives a reminder of the 2001 convention, to be held on the July 5-7 weekend, only 60 miles from Atlantic City, in Wilmington, Delaware.

Silver & Gold #32—*Special Final Edition*. A

memorial to Gale Sheldon. A beautiful tribute to a good and noble man. Ruth Sheldon, Gale's widow, and family gave this priceless memento of a life well lived to NAPA members.

November

Only six journals in the November bundle:

Boxwooder #376—Jacob Warner, publisher, features a poignant personal memoir by your next critic, Betty Simmons. The memoir concerns the slaughter which occurred on October 16, 1991, at Luby's Cafeteria in Killeen, Texas. Forty-six people were shot by George Hennard on that fateful Wednesday, and Betty's son was first of twenty-three to die. Betty's comments are indicative of her compassion. Although traumatized by her beloved son's death, she concludes: "I know I must forgive the injustice of George Hennard's actions. He was a tormented man who killed himself at the end. The Bible teaches us that the path to inner healing is forgiveness. Releasing hurt is difficult, but by doing so, I will move toward tomorrow on my journey toward recovery." This memoir is worthy of being published in a national commercial magazine.

Campane #203—Harold Segal publisher, is author of the featured manuscript, "Why Wilmington?" This not only gives brief highlights of previous conventions, but lauds Wilmington as the setting for the 2001 Convention. Rich Hopkins discusses "Letterpress and the AJ Crisis." His concluding paragraph is one all should heed: "Amateur Journalism is in a crisis right now. Whether it's able to weather the storm is a heated question. But linking its future with letterpress preservation is doomed for certain failure, for the letterpress coffin already is nailed shut." The final essay is "The Book, The Instrument," author unknown. It discusses at length what is "pleasantly readable." This issue's final offering is a humorous poem by Betty Simmons, "Lunch With The Editor." Its punch lines are: "So we'll split the check / for old time's sake. / I'd eaten hamburger, / He'd ordered steak."

Flexible Voice #247—Robert and Harriette Orbach, publishers. Robert offers a delightful memoir concerning his brief wartime interlude with movie star Ingrid Bergman. This incident

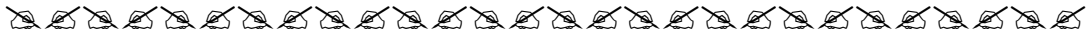
will comprise three pages in a forthcoming biography about Miss Bergman.

The Kitchen Stove #80—Louise Lincoln, publisher, offers pertinent (or impertinent, according to the biases of the reader) on a number of topics, including her tendency to be a prude (some would say she is prudent) and opinionated.

Note From The Manuscript Bureau Manager, published by Philip E. Lewis, who reports “I have received the manuscript file with nothing current in it.” I personally think sending anything to the manuscript bureau is like throwing it into a bottomless pit, where it will never again be seen, despite the manuscript bureau manager’s most heroic efforts. I do not envy Philip his job. After having lost several manuscripts in that bottomless pit, I find it

more feasible to send a brief letter of inquiry to the publisher, describing the manuscript.

Sugarcoated Gall #3—Bud Lesser, publisher, treats us to what I suspect is another (forked) tongue-in-cheek dissertation on a controversial subject. This one is on “Religion.” I don’t know whether God smiled—but I betcha Satan belly-laughed, and I chuckled right along with him. Please note his adroit use of quotes, which enrich any writing when carefully chosen and prudently placed. I don’t get to keep my copy of *Sugarcoated Gall*—I share it with as many non-NAPA friends as possible, and someone always latches onto it and fails to return it. (Whether Bud has his tongue in cheek when he writes *Sugarcoated Gall* I cannot truly know; but my tongue is in my cheek when I read it.)



The Beginning of a New Venture

By Betty Simmons

I am honored and surprised to be asked to give quarterly critiques for the monthly bundles. I am a relatively new member of this fine organization, but plan to remain a member for a long time. God willing. I’m seventy-five.

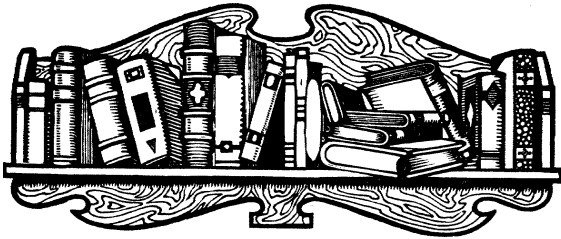
I accepted this post with a heartfelt desire to do a good job, but with trepidation, as well. You see I’m used to writer’s critique groups and have found constructive criticism improved my work. I also know it’s hard to accept negative criticism. It’s been suggested my task will be easier if I mostly summarize and give praise. I truly enjoy reading our members’ contributions and get something good and learn something new from each bundle. I also believe I have the ability to recognize various stages of writing skills. You see, I’ve been there and am still there. I have a long way to go to polish my skills. The more I write, the more I learn about how to write. It’s been said it’s hard to write 100 bad stories, articles, essays, poetry, etc. without discovering how to do it better and eventually produce publishable material—if that happens to be your goal. Therefore I cannot promise I will never give a suggestion I believe will improve a piece. Just remember it is always your

option to ignore or debate my opinion. I’m certainly not claiming I always know how to improve a manuscript. If I did, I wouldn’t have files of unsold manuscripts. But after several revisions, many do sell.

I do have some experience. I’ve written a 128,000 word novel which I’ve completely revised more than five times. That’s a lot of words. So I am a serious writer and sometimes I may have a suggestion or two I’ve discovered the hard way.

I admire Merry Harris’ stories and critiques. She has done an admirable job. I have also read several other critiques from older issues from copies provided by my good friend, Ann Vrooman, an accomplished writer, and a long-time member who sponsored my application. By the way, her first novel, *BLACK FROST*, is now available via the internet. She has promised to give me advice on pieces I feel need a second opinion.

I promise to try my best. I am open to any comments, either in print, letters to the editor or personal correspondence and feel free to critique any of my manuscripts published in the bundle. Okay. Let’s do lots of writing and enjoy every second of it.



HISTORIAN'S REPORT

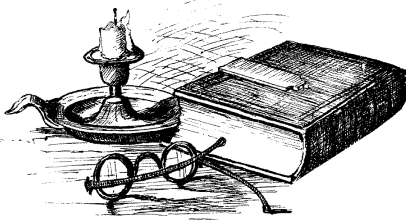
BY WILLIAM H. GROVEMAN

JULY BUNDLE

- The Boxwooder*, #372, July 2000, 12pp. & cover, 5x7, Jake Warner
The Flexible Voice, #243, July 2000, 2pp., 5½x8½, Robert & Harriette Orbach
Squawks of Whizdom, #4, Year 2000, 4pp., 4¼x5½, Robert F. Nelson
Tracks, #17, June 2000, 4pp., 5½x8½, Linda Jean Foster
Tracks, #18, July 2000, 4pp., 5½x8½, Linda Jean Foster

AUGUST BUNDLE

- The Boxwooder*, #373, August 2000, 8pp. & cover, 5x7, Jake Warner
Campane, #201, July 2000, 12pp., 5x7, Harold Segal
Email report, #1, July 7 2000, 2pp., 8½x11, Tom Parson
The Flexible Voice, #244, August 2000, 2pp., 5½x8½, Robert & Harriette Orbach
The Gage Pin, #62, Summer 2000, 4pp., 4¼x5½, Fred Gage
The Good Life, August 2000, 1pp., 8~2x11, Estelle & Bob Eaton
The Las Vegas Jackpot, #1, July 3 2000, 4pp., 3½x5, the convention paper produced by the attending high rollers.
The Las Vegas Jackpot, #2, July 4 2000, 4pp., 3½x5.
The Las Vegas Jackpot, #3, July 5 2000, 4pp., 3½x5.
The Las Vegas Jackpot, #4, July 6 2000, 4pp., 3½x5, Gale Sheldon
Merry-Go-Round, #25, Late Spring 2000, 2pp., 8½x11, Merry Harris
National Calamity, #114, September 2000, 4pp., 5x7, Frederick J. Liddle



- The New Underground Amateur Gambler*, #1, July 4 2000, 4pp., 5½x8½, Tom Parson.
The New Underground Amateur Gambler, #2, July 5 2000, 4pp., 4½x5½, Tom Parson.
Notes About the Bundle, undated, 2pp., 5½x8½, Donald Bauer
Shampane, #95, August 2000, 4pp., 4¼x7, Alvoid Seck (aka Alvin Fick & Harold Segal)

SEPTEMBER BUNDLE

- The Boxwooder*, #374, September 2000, 8pp. & cover, 5x7, Jake Warner
The Buck Creek Press, #28, September 2000, 4pp., 7x8½, Wilson L. Barto Sr.
The Flexible Voice, #245, September 2000, 2pp., 5½x9¼, Robert & Harriette Orbach
The Iron Horse, Extra Edition, September 2000, 1pp., 5½x8½, Don Bauer
The Old Hat, #12, July 2000, 2pp., 5x7, Helena R. Keefe
Squawks of Whizdom, #2, Year 2000, 8pp. & cover, 5x7, Robert F. Nelson.
Squawks of Whizdom, #5, Year 2000, 4pp., 4½x5½, Robert F. Nelson.
Sugarcoated Gall, #2, September 2000, 2pp., 8½x11, Bud Lesser



OCTOBER BUNDLE

- Better Never Than Late Press*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Fall 2000, 1pp., 4½x6, George Chapman
The Boxwooder, #375, October 2000, 8pp. & cover, 5x7, Jake Warner
Campane, #202, October 2000, 12pp., 5x7, Harold Segal
The Ethnicicicist, #23, October 2000, 4pp., 5½x4¼, Jim Kapplin
The Flexible Voice, #246, October 2000, 2pp., 5½x9¼, Robert & Harriette Orbach
Lake Effect, #2, August 2000, 8pp. & cover, 5x7, Arie Koelwyn
Shampane, #96, October 2000, 4pp., 4¼x7, Harold Segal & Al Fick
Silver & Gold, #32, September 2000, 16pp. & cover, 5½x8½, *Special Final Edition* by Ruth Sheldon and family with John Robinson

Also received in October:

- The National Amateur*, Volume 123, #1, September 2000, 7x10, Melody Warner, Official Editor

SECRETARY'S REPORT

—September 2000

Reinstatements (3)

Visser, Jack
Warner, Melody
Warner, Alice

New Members — Regular (2)

Taylor, Dana,
14130 W Teal Blvd Apt C, Beaverton,
OR 97008;
Sponsor: Bob Mills

Young, Scott,
902 Elldom Ave, Waseca, MN 56093;
Web recruit!

Application indicates he may have been a member 30+ years ago. I can't find anything in the membership cards. He writes: "Discovered printing in Jr. High School. Traded an old snowmobile for my first press - a 6x10 Kelsey with all the supplies.

"Went on to the University of Wisconsin-Stout to study 'Graphic Arts Education' Have worked in several print shops since college and have collected several presses. At one time I had 4 6 1/2 x10 C&P Pilot presses, large cutter and a 1250 Multilith. Job change forced me to get rid of my shop.

After a few years here in Waseca I now have another 6x10 Kelsey, working part-time in a print shop—enjoying getting back into printing. I'm hoping to teach my daughter, Kelsey, 12, how to use the press, set type, etc. "Hoping to find a small treadle or motorized press (C&P or Pearl) to add to the shop."

New Members — Family (1)

Young, Kelsey,
902 Elldom Ave,
Waseca, MN 56093

Deceased (1)

Gale Sheldon

—October 2000

Renewals — Family (1)

Young, Helen

Dropped — Regular (4)

Adams, Lowell
Orbach, Harriet
McCluney, Gene
Powell, Charles Jr.

Deceased (1)

McClure, Arthur

Address Changes/Corrections (2)

O'Brien, Alfred, 22 WW Broadway, PO Box
418 Salem, NY 12865
Novak, David, 1636 Loomis St, LaCrosse,
WI 54603

Resigned (1)

Sheard, Nubia (Trial??, she sent a note along that said she had just asked for a sample NA and now wants to be dropped from the mailing list. I can't find a membership card)

Subscriptions (1)

Jessie Ruth Lewis (renewal)

—November 2000

Reinstatements (1)

Young, Carolyn Rice

New Members — Regular (1)

Drossel, Edna,
7540 W Ave A, Lancaster, CA 93536;
Sponsor: William Gordon

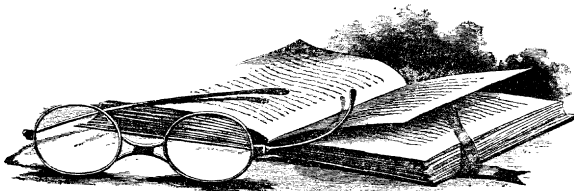
—Arie Koelewyn, Secretary-Treasurer

Recorder's Report: July—October Bundles

The names of life members are not included, since they may vote without publishing anything.

Wilson Barto
George Chapman
Bob Eaton
Estelle Eaton
Linda Foster
Merry Harris
Ralph Howell
James Kapplin
Helena Keefe

Arie Koelewyn
Morris Lesser
Fred Liddle
Robert Nelson
Jack Oliver
Harriette Orbach
Tom Parson
John Strange



WHAT IT IS

Recruits are very inconvenient to have about when in a questioning mood. They ask so many questions that they would never think of asking after they had been in the 'dom long enough to know that there are no answers to them. For instance, they want to know "What is Amateur Journalism?" and even "What is an Amateur Journalist?" Their attitude is like that of the gentleman in "Little Dorrit," who so infuriated the people in the Circumlocution Office by "coming in and wanting to know, you know."

"What is Amateur Journalism?" That is a hard one. "What is an amateur Journalist?" is more easily answered, because the Amateur interrogated can always point to himself and say, "Why, I'm one." Amateur Journalism means so many things. To publish a paper with no hope of reward short of heaven is in effect the dictionary definition of amateur, but it is not the Amateur Journalist's definition.

Exceptions being the rule, it follows that there are Amateurs who make money out of amateur papers—for who shall say that journals like the *Acorn*, with flourishing advertising columns, are not self-supporting? It also follows that there are Amateurs who advise this sort of thing—for Finlay Grant long ago declared that advertising was the only way in which the amateur paper could prove anything but a ruinous venture in the days when second class rates were not allowed.

Speaking of second class rates brings to mind the fact that no paper can obtain these rates without having a regular price for advertising; papers desirous of going through the mails for one cent a pound must also live up to several other "professional" features. They must be numbered consecutively, dated in the place where mailed, and have bona fide subscription lists. Living up to these requirements is good training for the lad or lassie who is a veritable tyro in A. J. Applying for second class rates is in many places a liberal education in the postal

laws of the country, and mailing the papers is equal to passing a quarterly examination.

But the "old-timer" who is in the "caws" for pure love, who when not an amateur is mayhap an editorial writer, or a blacksmith, or something equally useful, the bread and butter question of youth having become one of bread alone with him, cannot bear any restrictions that take away the free and easy quality of Amateur Journalism. He wants to get his paper out when he pleases, with no "Century size" nonsense about it. He wants to print it in Chicago, and mail it in New Orleans, he wants to assert "Advertisements and subscriptions repudiated with scorn," he is especially fond of dating a paper 1892, publishing it in 1894 and mailing it in 1895.

An hour tomorrow being longer than the whole of last year, it follows that the Amateur paper is always behind time. Ernest T. Capen, a well known old timer, has given a pretty good definition of Amateur Journalism by declaring "My paper wouldn't be an Amateur paper if it wasn't always late." Any active Amateur will recognize the truth of the definition—but it will hardly do to tell a recruit.

As for the Amateur Journalist, he may very likely be no Amateur Journalist at all—merely an author. For the varieties of Amateur Journalists are these: Those who print papers and do not write the contents; those who write and never print; those who attend conventions; those who get out papers after conventions, criticising these conventions, but who probably never attend these conventions; authors; and a few who do all these things and more. The average amateur is not kept from being an "all round" man by lack of energy, so much as by lack of cash. As a rule he has only so much money to spend on A. J.; it he attends a convention his paper suffers, and vice versa. A brain divided against itself cannot think, and a pocketbook divided is equally useless. Sometimes, of course, the man who runs after two hares catches both, but only when they are running in the same direction.

N