

Newsboy

Jack Bales, Editor
1407A Winchester St.
Fredericksburg, VA 22401



Official publication of the HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY,
a magazine devoted to the study of Horatio Alger, Jr.,
his life, works, and influence on the culture of America.

Horatio Alger Jr.

1832 - 1899



Founded 1961 by Forrest Campbell & Kenneth B. Butler

Volume XXII

November-December 1983

Numbers 5-6



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To further the philosophy of Horatio Alger, Jr., and to encourage the spirit of Strive and Succeed that for half a century guided Alger's undaunted heroes--lads whose struggles epitomized the Great American Dream and flamed hero ideals in countless millions of young Americans.

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* * *

NEW MEMBERS REPORTED

PF-718 Marie A. Johnson
Route 2
Clinton, Michigan 49236

Marie, a professional numismatist, heard of HAS through Colonel William Pengelly. Owner of 102 Algers, she is interested in numismatic literature in all languages, Michigan and Great Lakes History, and, of course, collecting, trading, and selling Alger books.

* * *

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

PF-428 Harry L. Lane
Apt. 105
3815 Cabana Blvd.
Mobile, Alabama 36609

PF-548 Peter C. Walther
Box 81
Clinton, N.Y. 13323

PF-682 Nancy Turner
3632 Bolamo Drive
Westerville, Ohio 43081

PF-693 Pastor Harvey Seidel
19 Bartlett Lane
Cody, Wyoming 82414

* * *

LETTERS

Letters to the Editor are welcome and will be considered for publication, but may be edited or condensed due to space limitations.

R. R. #3, Box 337
Little Falls, N.Y.
April, 1982
(started)

Dear Jack,

Sorry, you asked for it in column 2, page 8, of the March-April 1982 Newsboy. Quoting you, "Personally, I don't know who is America's best selling author. Louis L'Amour must hold some sort of record--his books have sold more than 90 million copies." Facts about L'Amour are as follows: numbers sold are published on the backs of his books. One

title--in 1983--says that his books have sold over 140,000,000 copies. I have read all of his books--they are really good.

However, L'Amour's sales are almost a trickle compared to Edgar Rice Burroughs. In yesterday's mail I received a letter from Danton Burroughs. He enclosed some recent Burroughs publications. One of them, The Tarzan Drumbeat, makes this statement: "In 62 years more than 600 million items have been sold in 52 different countries." Danton is listed as Secretary-Treasurer of ERB, Inc., and is the grandson of the author.

In checking the production of Zane Grey, I find that he had sold 27 million at the time of his death in 1939. When Gruber wrote the biography in 1968, sales had increased to 40 million. In the last 30 years I have handled over 2000 Algers, purchased at antique shows, flea markets, rummage sales, book dealers, etc. In the same time I have located only 400 by ERB, and about 200 by Zane Grey. Algers in the used book market ran about 10 to 1 over Grey and 5 to 1 over ERB. To me this tends to indicate that Alger had very high sales.

Sincerely,

Milton Salls

* * *
THE HUMPBACKED CONTRIBUTOR
by Horatio Alger, Jr.

(Editor's note: The following Alger short story is from the collection of Gary Scharnhorst [See March-April 1983 Newsboy, page 19.] It originally appeared in the December 17, 1853 issue of the American Union, and remained unknown to Alger scholars until just this past year. Thanks go to Gary for sharing it with the members of HAS, and to Gilbert K. Westgard II for providing me with a typed copy to transcribe).

William Potter was not one of those who think ladies have no business to cultivate literature. Although he had no especial liking for the character of

a professed blue, he believed that the cultivation of literary talent, when it is not carried so far as to exclude everything else, lends an additional grace to the female character.

"When I marry," he would frequently say, "I shall not select a woman who is a good cook and nothing else, nor, on the other hand, one who has an abundance of book knowledge, but is unacquainted with the practical details of every day life. I want something more than either. My choice will rest on one, if I am fortunate enough to discover such a person, who knows how to combine both these qualifications without either entrenching on the legitimate province of the other."

Such was the resolution which Mr. Potter formed, and such the rule by which he professed that he should be guided in the choice of a wife.

As might be expected from his literary taste, he was a subscriber to several literary papers and magazines. In several of these he observed poems of great beauty and simplicity, signed Juliet. These he at first admired casually, but by and by he began to take a more than ordinary interest in these passing productions, and to note with curiosity the gradual improvement in style and expression, and the freer utterance of thought which they manifested. He began, even to feel a personal interest in the unknown Juliet, and to long for her acquaintance. Every week or month, he glanced over the well-filled columns of the paper or magazine, to see if he could discover anything over the well-known signature.

Gradually his longings ripened into a purpose.

"I must see this Juliet," said he to himself. "I must become acquainted with her, and if on acquaintance she fulfills the expectations I have formed of her, she shall become Mrs. Potter, if my persuasions can avail anything."

He accordingly made a call at one of the newspaper offices to which "Juliet" was in the habit of sending contributions. The editor was at first unwilling to reveal her real name, alleging that she wished to remain

Soviet premier cuts 'red'

By Herman Baumann

Soviet Premier Yuri Andropov recently cut red tape for a Des Plaines undertaker who is doing research for a book on British author and feminist Beatrice Harraden.

Undertaker Gilbert K. Westgard II, whose hobby is reading and literature, wrote Andropov for help in early June after his letters were shuffled for almost a year between the Lenin Library in Moscow and the "All-Union State Order of The Red Banner of

Labour Library of Foreign Literature."

Westgard, a long-time member of the Edison Park Lutheran Church, is the son of Dr. and Mrs. Gilbert K. Westgard, now of Boynton Beach, Fla. Dr. Westgard was a dentist in the Edison Park and Park Ridge area for nearly 45 years.

All Westgard wanted was a photo copy of the title page from a Russian translation of Harraden's only hit

novel, "Ships That Pass In The Night." He said he wants to include it in a biographical book he is writing about the British author.

"The so-called red tape was unbelievable," Westgard said. "After getting no results for several months, I read about the letter Samatha Smith wrote to Andropov, which resulted in her tour of Russia. I'd tried everything else, so I thought that if he was willing to help her, he might be willing to help me. So I wrote him a letter explaining what I was looking for and the problems I was having."

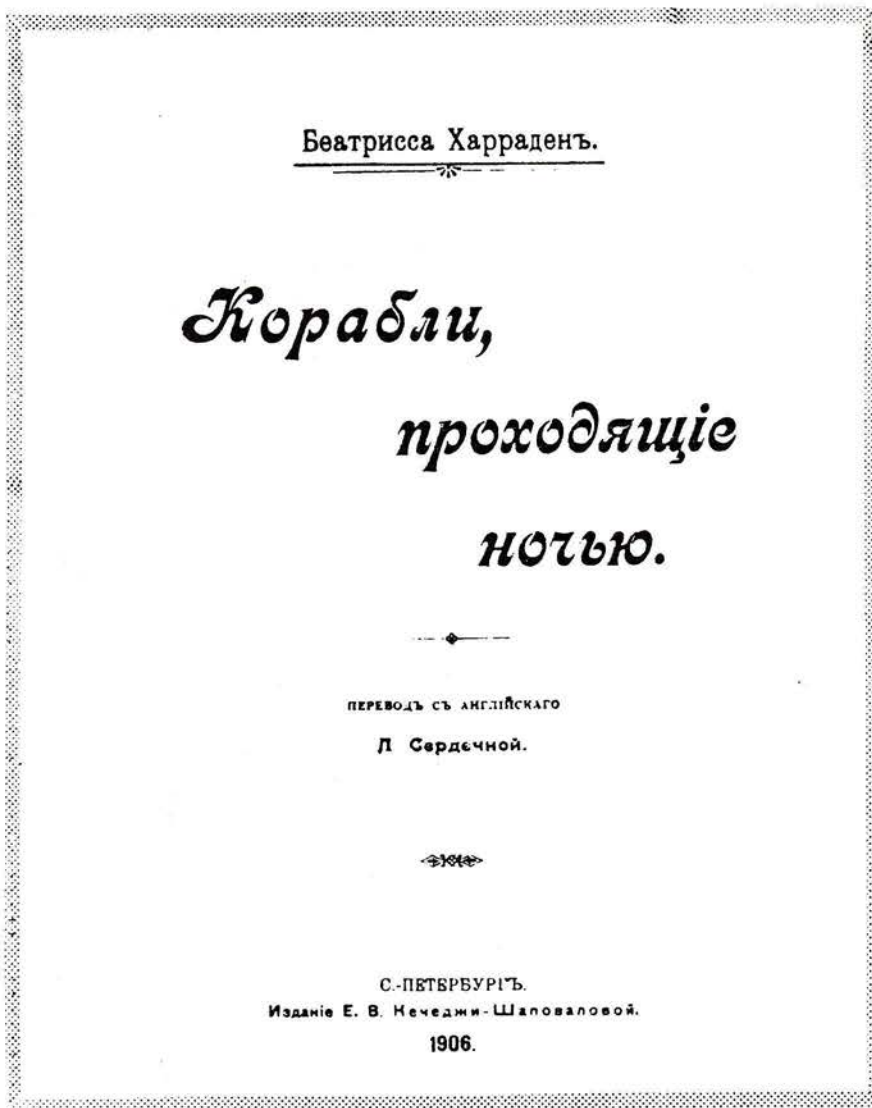
A few weeks after sending the letter to Andropov, Westgard received the photo copy he was seeking and a letter from the Library of Foreign Literature telling him that a Russian translation of Harraden's book is located in the Lenin Library. That is where he sent his first inquiry.

"The letter to Andropov must have pushed the libraries into action," Westgard said. "I didn't receive a personal reply from Andropov, but suddenly I got what I was looking for."

Westgard said "Ships That Pass In The Night" was published in England in 1893 after a publisher bought total rights to the book for \$105. Because of copyright laws at the time, publishers outside England were able to pirate the popular book without paying Harraden or the English publisher for the book rights. The book was translated into several languages and sold over one million copies. In the 1920s it was also made into a movie.

Westgard is attempting to track down all editions of the book. Her total literary output consisted of 21 books, of which Westgard now has about half. Twenty-five different publishers "pirated" "Ships That Pass in the Night," and he has about a third of these editions, in several languages.

One of the reasons Westgard said he is interested in writing a book on Harraden is that there currently is no book on the author. He said she is also in-



This is the photo copy that Westgard was trying to find: the title page of the Russian translation of Beatrice Harraden's only "hit" novel, "Ships That Pass In The Night."

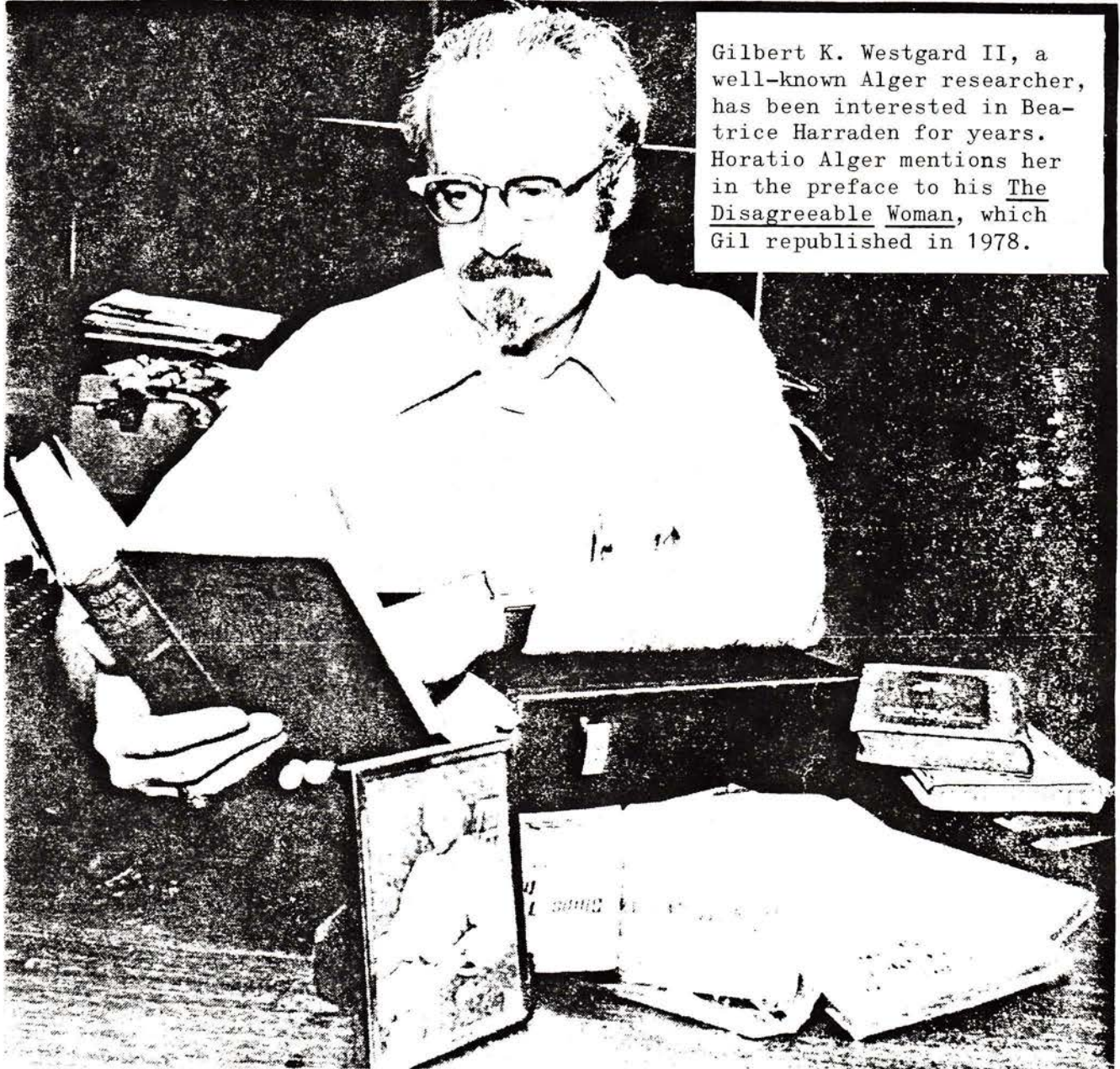
(Edison Park, Ill.)

THE REVIEW

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1983

Page 15

'tape' for area researcher



Gilbert K. Westgard II, a well-known Alger researcher, has been interested in Beatrice Harraden for years. Horatio Alger mentions her in the preface to his The Disagreeable Woman, which Gil republished in 1978.

Undertaker Gilbert K. Westgard, 9226 W. Golf Road, Des Plaines, reads the original edition of British author Beatrice Harraden's "Ships That Pass in the Night." Other books in the picture are pirate editions of the novel. He turned to Soviet Premier Yuri

Andropov to cut red tape for him after Russian libraries failed to help him obtain a photocopy from a Russian translation of Harraden's book.

teresting because she was a feminist long before the present movement was popular.

Westgard quoted Harraden from a piece written in 1910: "I have never quite known the exact meaning of the

word 'feminist,' but if it means someone who, without being in the least hostile to men, believes in her own sex, is proud of it, and claims for it equal justice, equal pay for equal work honestly accomplished, and, of course, equal

citizenship, then I am proud to say that I was born a feminist."

Another of Westgard's hobbies is book collecting. He said he owns more than 12,000 books, some of which are rare.

unknown. This only strengthened William's desire to learn it, for said he to himself, "she is modest, and that is an excellent quality in a woman."

He finally prevailed on the editor to forward to Juliet's address a letter which he should write, and let her decide whether to notice it or not as she chose.

He went home and soon returned with the following letter, of which I am glad for the reader's sake that I have secured a copy.

"Dear Juliet:--I would that I were able to address you by your real name, but of that I am still in ignorance. Pardon the presumption of a stranger in addressing you thus unceremoniously. I can only plead in extenuation that I do not consider you a stranger. I have for months been in the habit of reading the beautiful poems which you have contributed to the periodicals of the day; I have felt that in them I saw the reflex of your mind and heart, and I could not view you as a stranger.

I have a favor to ask--let me trust not in vain. Will you confide to me your real name, and allow me the pleasure of a personal acquaintance? Without pressing my request further, I leave it to you to decide upon it, begging you to believe that it is dictated by a sincere admiration for your talents.

With the deepest respect,
William Potter."

It is high time that we introduce the as yet unknown "Juliet" to the reader's notice. We hasten to do so in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

"Can it be possible? Is this
The fair divinity that has for
months
Possessed my waking moments,
Woven itself into my dreams
And filled me with its presence?
No! no! it is all a dream,
Evoked by fruitful fancy."

Anon.

The postman's knock was heard at the door of Dr. Richmond's residence in the village of Plainville, situated

within fifty miles of New York.

"A letter for May, and in a gentleman's hand," said little Effie, who went to the door. "Which one of your beaux is it from?"

May Richmond hastily took the letter from the hands of her sister. I need not say it was the identical one which the reader has had the pleasure of perusing, a few lines above. She blushed deeply--did you ever notice how much a blush becomes a beautiful girl of eighteen, and May was beautiful--and then, after a moment's pause, with a smiling face handed it to her father.

He looked over it, and at the end laughed heartily.

"What are you going to do about it?" he asked.

"I hardly know," said she.

"I'll tell you what," said little Effie, who had been poring over the letter, "tell him to come, and then you can dress yourself up like an old woman, and see how he will be astonished."

"I believe I will do something of the kind," said May mischievously. "It will be a good joke."

"And," continued Effie, "you will have to change your name then, for May would never do for an old woman."

"I believe I will call myself Betsey," said May laughing.

The next mail carried to Mr. Potter a letter signed Betsey Richmond, granting him the permission he had requested, and appointing a day when she would be willing to receive him. She wrote in conclusion, "I certainly should not have granted your request had I not discovered, or felt from the tone of your letter, an evidence of refinement and sincerity that speaks to the innermost mind, and not to the outwardly visible evidence of the person."

When the letter arrived Mr. Potter was overjoyed to find his expectations had not been in vain, though he rather stumbled at the plebeian name Betsey. "But of course she is not to blame for that," he argued.

He went to the tailor's and had a new suit made in anticipation of the appointed day, for, though not a vain

man, he was not blind to the advantages of dress to one who was desirous of making a favorable first impression.

A week must elapse before the time arrived. He was in a fever of impatience for it to pass away. At length it did pass, and he placed himself in the cars having secured a ticket to Plainville.

He inquired at the hotel for the residence of Dr. Richmond. He was directed to a pretty Gothic cottage with a pleasant yard in front shaded by fruit trees bearing abundantly. It was quite a beautiful home, a fit casket, thought he, for such a jewel.

He was ushered into the parlor, and in a few moments a female form made her appearance. But alas, for his anticipations! How woefully was he disappointed! The unknown Juliet had a hump between her shoulders, and her hair was of that color which is the special aversion of both sexes--flaring red.

When he gained courage to look at her face, he found that despite the red hair it was really very pretty. But what face can counterbalance two such drawbacks as a hump and red hair?

Mr. Potter was so much taken aback that he made his salutation very awkwardly, and it was with great difficulty that he spoke a few words of salutation and acknowledgment of the kindness which had granted him this favor.

"I am very much indebted to you for your kind permission to visit you," and I must beg you to pardon whatever of presumption or boldness you may have seen in my request."

He cast his eyes on the floor, that he might be relieved from the sight of the hump and red hair.

It was a very pleasant and sweet voice which assured him in reply that he was quite forgiven for any presumption of which he might have been guilty.

William looked up half in doubt whether the voice actually proceeded from the hump-backed Betsey, but there was no other in the room.

Soon the conversation branched off upon other topics, chiefly connected with literature and books, on which May expressed herself readily and with apparent fulness of information.

An hour passed in this manner, when Mr. Potter arose to go.

May pressed him to remain to dinner, assuring him that her parents would welcome him. He accepted the invitation, feeling a curiosity to see the rest of the family, and reseated himself.

"You will excuse me for a little while," apologized May, smiling; "as we have but one domestic, my services will be called for in the kitchen."

When he was left to himself, Mr. Potter began to reflect.

"She is certainly a charming companion," he thought, "so full of vivacity and information--but that odious hump and such fiery red hair. Still she has a pretty face especially when she smiles. She is just such a woman as I wished for a wife. There are but two impediments, but such impediments!"

At the dinner table Mr. Potter was introduced to the remainder of the family, viz: Dr. and Mrs. Richmond and little Effie. The latter could hardly restrain herself from laughing outright when she looked at her sister's red wig, and had occasion to ask,

"Please pass the salt, sister Betsey!"

Nevertheless the dinner-party was a very pleasant one. The doctor was a man of intelligence, and May shone with unusual brilliancy.

Mr. Potter professing his intention to spend a week in town, was invited to call frequently.

He availed himself of this invitation. At each visit he became more and more charmed with May. Gradually the physical disadvantages which at first struck him so disagreeably softened down. They no longer appeared so formidable as at first. The red hair he came soon to regard as only "rather a strong shade of auburn," and read with interest that in Greece it is considered a mark of female beauty.

The fact was William Potter was fast falling in love.

The week soon expired, but it was not long before he made his appearance in Plainville once more. He was again obliged to spend a week at the village hotel, "for the benefit of his health," he said.

These visits increased in frequency till some six months had passed since the date of his first acquaintance with the unknown contributor.

One evening he made a declaration of love to May Richmond.

She looked incredulous, and inquired,

"Is it possible, Mr. Potter, that you would be willing to marry a woman with a humpback and red hair?"

"I will not scruple to say," he replied, "that there was a time when these would have been impediments to my love. But, since I have known you, I have had such an opportunity of viewing the grace and propriety with which you demean yourself on all occasions--the fullness of information and charming conversational powers which you possess--that I no longer consider them as of any weight in the matter."

"Frankly then, as you have done, I will confess that I too have been pleased with you, and that I accept your proposal in the spirit in which it is offered."

So saying, and before William could express his thanks, May left the room, and directly afterwards returned divested of the hump and the red wig.

Mr. Potter arose in amazement.

"I see," said May, "you wish for an explanation. Know then, that in the first place, my name is May, not Betsey, and that my red hair and hump, were not the creation of Nature but of a less skilful artificer. Will you pardon me the deception?"

"Pardon you, my dearest May," was the reply of the delighted lover, as he folded her--

But our story ends here.

* * *

NEWSBOYS' LODGING-HOUSE

The following article is from the February 24, 1887 issue of The Youth's Companion, page 81, and was sent in by HAS member Robert Banks.

Much has been written about the Newsboys' Lodge--in the Newsboy as well as in other publications--but I don't think that this article has ever been reprinted. Thanks, Bob!

For the Companion.

NEWSBOYS' LODGING-HOUSE.

The newsboys' lodging-house, at the corner of Duane and New Chambers Streets, is one of the most interesting of the institutions inaugurated by the Children's Aid Society in New York. The building, from its size and general appearance, is calculated to attract the attention of passengers in the streets near it, and to make them inquire its uses.

It is five stories high, built of brick, and is fire-proof. The ground floor is mostly occupied by stores or offices; this being a portion of the great city where every available space is in demand for business purposes. There is room left, however, for a broad corridor running from street to street, through one side of the building, which gives ample space for the requirements of the lodging-house above.

It is nearly twenty-eight years since the first Newsboys' Lodging-House was opened by the Children's Aid Society. The movement grew out of the constant spectacle, which earliest and most painfully arrested the attention of Mr. Brace, the originator of the Society. He says, "the poor houseless, homeless boys seemed to him," like what the police call them, "street-rats" who gnawed at the foundations of society, and scamp-ered away when light was brought near them."

He found them sleeping in boxes under stairways, or in hay-barges, on the coldest winter nights, sometimes a dozen of them lying together to keep warm; this was hard enough for mere children; but often to have little food, to be kicked and cuffed by older ruffians, shoved about by the police, and standing barefooted and in rags under any possible shelter during the winter storms, knowing, that in all this immense city not a single door was open to them with welcome--this was harder.

Yet under such conditions, lighter-hearted youngsters than the newsboys are not to be found; ready to make fun of their sufferings, to "chaff" their companions, and struggle for an existence, with faces old from exposure, clothes in tatters, and feet in broken shoes.

The newsboy has his code of morals. He pays his debts to other boys, and thinks it dishonorable to sell papers on another boy's "beat." If he can only earn enough to have a place to sleep, and to get something to eat, he is happy.

His temptations are to cheat, lie and steal. All these facts and conditions, in the average newsboy's life, in the streets of New York, Mr. Brace became thoroughly acquainted with, and he sought to change the character and morals of these boys, and, if it was possible, to draw them under kindly influences.

In planning the alleviation of the evils he sought to remedy in their lives, it was necessary to keep one object in view, namely--not to destroy their sturdy independence, nor could their prejudices or mode of living be too suddenly assailed. They had, he found, a perfect horror of Sunday schools and religious exhortations, considering them "a pious dodge" to get them into a house of refuge. The lads could only be treated as independent little dealers, and to do this, nothing must be given them without payment. The Society first rented a single apartment, making it a general lodging and living room. This was in 1854, and was the first lodging-house for newsboys in this country.

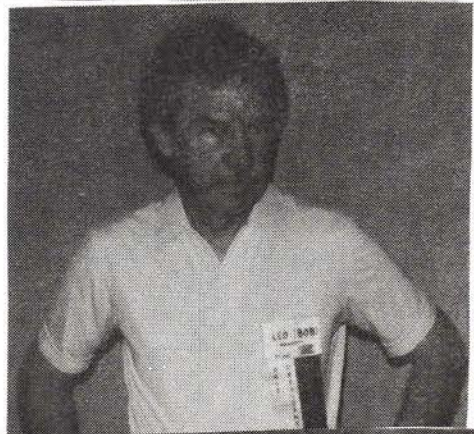
This first attempt was regarded with suspicion

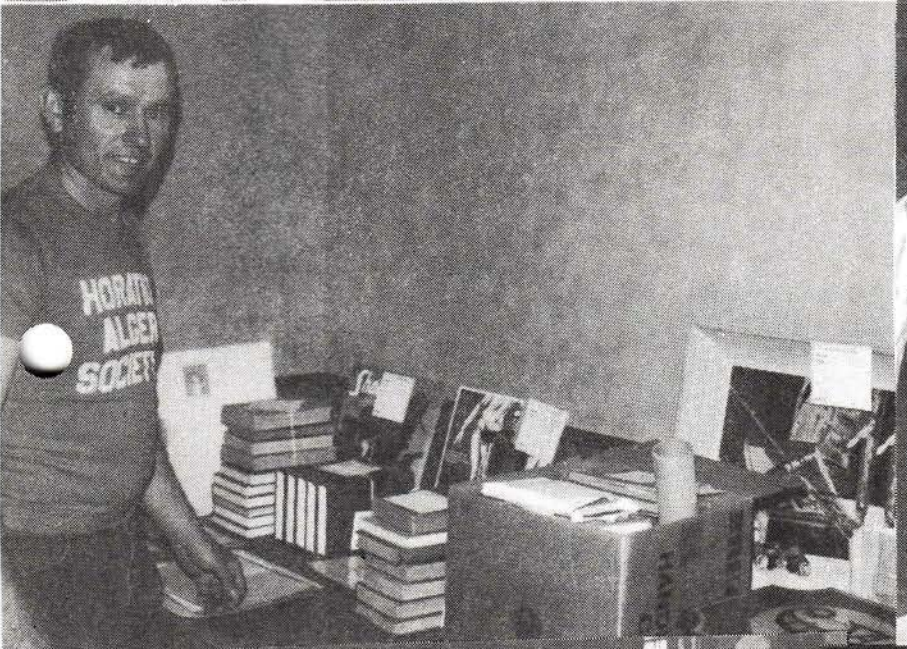


"COLLECTED
IN COLUMBUS"

May 5 - 8, 1983

Newsboy







by the little *gamins* for whom it was intended. To find a good bed, a supper and a bath for ten cents, was a fact they could not understand. Still a few of them thought they would have a "lark" and try it. They laid their plans for a "scrimmage," intending to cut off the gas, and have a general row at bedtime. The superintendent was too much for them, having the gas pipes guarded.

There was little sleep in the room that night; but the discovery was made that the beds were good, and the food appetizing, and while they must yield to the authority of the superintendent, that the place was comfortable.

It is interesting to learn how the boys were first led into departures from their usual life by kindness, and the excellent tact which controlled all the movements of the Aid Society for their benefit.

One evening the superintendent said, "Boys, a gentleman was here to get a boy for his office, at three dollars a week." A dozen called out, "Let me go." "Yes; but he wants a boy who can read and write."

Their countenances fell.

"Well, now, suppose we have an evening-school, then you can learn to read and write. What do you say, boys?"

"Agreed," they shouted, and the night-school was instituted; so the Sunday meeting was entered upon.

The boys had been much impressed with a great public funeral, and for the first time it was suggested by the superintendent, he should read from

the Bible to them. They were surprised at its contents; the "Golden Rule," particularly, was a new truth to many of them. Some of them had never heard of Christ, and it seemed a comfort to these vagabonds that the Son of God had been homeless and deserted like themselves.

The singing, in those first Sunday meetings, was usually prepared for by the boys taking off their coats and rolling up their sleeves. A favorite song was "There's Rest for the Weary," and they delighted in "There's a Light in the Window for Thee, Brother," taking the words as though particularly intended for them.

Their especial vice of wasting money was broken up by opening a Saving's Bank; the "sense of property" after they had saved a little sum, seeming to be a pleasure they had never hoped to realize. And so by degrees one reform after another was made, until the newsboy who could reside in the Children's Aid Society Lodging-House was considered a fortunate fellow by his associates.



NEWSBOYS' LODGING-HOUSE.



December 25, 1947

Merry Christmas!

Little Boy Meets Author

When I was a boy I spent a charmed evening in the company of Horatio Alger, Jr., the pioneer publicity agent of boyhood. In those days the retail bookstores of Putnam and Dutton were side by side on Fifth Avenue near Twenty-second Street. I sometimes dropped in to look at the books displayed on their tables. One of the salesmen, a Mr. Gardner, noticed me and became friendly. (I bracket these two stores because I really do not know in which one it was that I met Mr. Gardner.) We often talked about boys' reading. One day he said: "My friend, Mr. Alger, who has written many boys' books, is in town. Once a week he receives a group of boys in his sitting room. Would you like to go?"

"Would I?"

At the appointed time Mr. Gardner, probably leading me by the hand, approached the shrine of genius, probably 52 West Twenty-sixth Street. The room was already full of boys. A short, almost bald man wearing nose glasses, with a protruding lower lip and an upward tilt of the head, welcomed us. There was a New England air about Mr. Alger, and something birdlike too.

We took our seats in the circle of chairs which extended part way around the room. One boy was pointed out as the prototype of the hero of a recent Alger short story in the *Youth's Companion*, and he was said to be a favorite subject. Other boys had figured in books and short stories. Fame might strike almost anywhere in that charmed circle.

Mr. Alger sat at a writing desk and asked questions. I did not see him take any notes and do not remember what was said but it was understood that he was gathering material—that boys' personalities were somehow in process of filtering through to the printed page. I was made supremely happy by the gift of a signed portrait of our host, which I still have.

—GEORGE STEELE SEYMOUR
(MY NEW YORK)

This fascinating item is from the collection of Ralph D. Gardner, and it has never been reprinted until now. Many thanks are given to Ralph for sharing it with HAS—as we celebrate Christmas 1983.



FROM THE EDITOR'S SCRAP BOOK



Paul House writes that "I am attempting to collect all past issues of the News-boy. I am missing the following: Volume 1, nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8. Volume 2, nos. 1, 3, and 6. Volume 7, nos. 6 & 7. Volume 9, nos. 3 & 10. Volume 10, no. 1. Volume 11, no. 10. Volume 12, no. 5. Xerox copies of any numbers of Volumes 1 and 2 are acceptable. If you have or are able to obtain any or all of the above listed material I wish to purchase it. If any or all is available please advise me of the price and I will forward you a check for same." If any members can help Paul, please write him at 4837 Richardt St., Indianapolis, Indiana 46226.

Roy Wendell always sends me clippings that mention Alger. He recently came across one in the August 25, 1983 issue of The Boston Globe. Under the large headline, "Brewster Church Provides Sanctuary," the article described how the First Parish Church--where "Horatio Alger, whose name is synonymous with the American dream, was pastor from 1864 to 1866"--was "providing sanctuary to undocumented aliens from El Salvador and Guatemala."

HAS co-founder Ken Butler sent in an article from a summer issue of the Chicago Tribune. Concerned with America's love for heroes, it is entitled, "In Spirit of Horatio Alger." One paragraph reads: "Whatever happened to the Horatio Alger hero--the bootblack who earned a meager but honest living and gradually worked his way up the ladder of success? Paradoxically, in an era of ethical and moral decline, the Alger idea survives--even thrives."

A new book for the dime novel collector has just been published. It is the Dime Novel Round-Up: Annotated Index, 1931-1981. Compiled by Michael

L. Cook, it is published by Bowling Green University Popular Press, Bowling Green, Ohio 43403. The cost is \$6.95 for paper, and \$12.95 for cloth. The blurb from the publisher says that The Dime Novel Round-Up, begun in 1931 and published ever since, includes much information about dime novels. Many valuable, bibliographic listings appear, as well as thoroughly researched articles. Mr. Cook has performed a valuable service by indexing fifty years of The Dime Novel Round-Up. Indexing is by title, author and subject matter." (As most HAS members know, DNRU editor Eddie LeBlanc is a long time member of the Society and is one of its directors).

Hank Gravbelle wrote to enclose a photocopy of a Hurst book he has, the cover of which is one I've never seen before. He noted that neither Bob Bennett nor Ralph Gardner has seen it--it shows a well dressed boy standing beside a stone wall with a dog at his feet, talking with a boy on the other side of the wall. A grove of trees and a brook are in the background. (Hank also notes that he has been collecting Algers for about 45 years--he started at age 9).

Gene Hafner--one of the biggest Zane Grey enthusiasts--wrote to say that he was planning on attending the first Zane Grey Convention, held in Keene, Texas, near Fort Worth. "They will be emulating HAS, at my suggestion, to help raise some money to keep the fanzine going, Zane Grey's West. Any of our members interested in joining can send \$15.00 for a year's subscription, 4 copies, to Dr. Joe L. Wheeler, Drawer A, Keene, Texas 76059."

Betsy Curtis, R. D. #2, Box 50, Saegertown, PA 16433, an expert at



Staff photo by Lindy Keast Rodman

"SHINE" CREATORS — The four men who created "Shine" — The Horatio Alger Museum staff writer Robert Merritt (left), lyricist Lee Goldsmith and composer Richard Rogers Anderson (from left) and Richard Altman (right).

Richmond, VA Times Dispatch, Oct. 2, 1983

Creating 'Shine' was group effort

By Robert Merritt
Times-Dispatch staff writer

Who was Horatio Alger?

The four men who created "Shine — The Horatio Alger Musical," which opens the Virginia Museum Theater season Friday, have found that there's a lot of misunderstanding on that point. The four of them gathered recently at the Virginia Museum to recall how they came to know the man whose name is synonymous with the American Dream.

"People know about the American Dream and rags-to-riches stories, but they don't know who Horatio Alger was," noted Richard Seff, the writer who came up with the idea for the musical. "He's not important as a writer, his books are not considered literature, but there are still hundreds of very important people who were inspired by his stories."

"A lot of people even think that Horatio Alger is the character rather than the author," Seff continued.

"He wrote stories for almost 50 years [roughly 1870-1920] and they sold more copies than any author before or since, and now his books are almost impossible to find."

Seff learned about Alger from his mother, but the birth of "Shine" came almost as an accident. He had written a couple of plays, most notably "Paris Is Out" which was produced on Broadway in 1970, but was best known as an active member of New York's Circle Rep acting company and for his long 1979-80 off-

Broadway run in "Modigliani."

Seff just happened to hear a tape of music that young composer Roger Anderson had done. They got together to talk about an idea Seff had for a musical, and somewhere in the conversation the name Horatio Alger was mentioned. The next thing he knew, Anderson had written four songs with what he called "the Horatio Alger flavor."

"I wasn't so fascinated by Alger Continued on page 15, col. 1

Creating 'Shine' was group effort

Continued from first page

as I was by the idea of maybe doing something in that period," said Anderson, a Louisiana native who went to New York and the Juilliard School of Music with ambitions as a singer. "The show is set in 1876, and it's a time that has been untapped in musical theater. Alger's work had been approached before, but a lot of people would approach it with cynicism. Back in the 1960s the American Dream was something very dark."

It was almost five years ago that Seff and Anderson got together and decided that the "Shine" project was worth the effort. They began to research the period, mostly through the line drawings that appeared in magazines like Harper's, and then they added to the team.

Lee Goldsmith, a veteran lyricist, had just done the songs for a show to be called "Come Back Little Sheba." Neither Seff nor Anderson knew him, but when they heard the tapes they knew they had their man.

"I live in Florida, so I know the American Dream is not just an old story," Goldsmith said. "If anybody ever thought that the dream is dead, all they have to do is look at the Cuban refugees. These doctors and lawyers come in here and work at jobs that are equivalent to being a bootblack, and two years later they've climbed the ladder and gained prosperity as Americans.

"The American Dream" that Horatio Alger wrote about is still the dream, and it's the kind of opportunity that exists only here," Goldsmith added. "One doesn't have the opportunities in Europe, or anywhere else."

Richard Altman was the final member of the "Shine" team. He's a Californian, the author of several books on the entertainment field and the man responsible for staging several European productions

of "Fiddler on the Roof" and "Man of La Mancha."

"I went to California when they wanted to do a television pilot for a play I had done," Seff explained. "I knew Richard Altman's work and called him to see if he wanted to work on it with me. We did that, and then as we committed ourselves more and more to this show I decided that I wanted a collaborator. I wanted the experience and the security of having someone write it with me."

With Seff and Anderson in New York, Goldsmith in Florida and Altman in California, the completion of "Shine" was very much a long-distance affair. All four got together in California during the summer of 1979 to give the show its form, and then they grabbed a week whenever they could to work on the project.

Goldsmith preferred to work alone on his lyrics in Florida, then he would get with Anderson either by letter or phone to get the music going. Seff and Altman worked out ideas on their own, then got together whenever one had an opportunity to visit the opposite coast.

"I think it helped because we were apart," Seff said. "When we could all get together it was usually for only a week or two, so the work was intense. When we got together we really worked, and we got a lot accomplished."

The musical was sold almost as soon as it was completed to a movie studio, but production was cancelled when the studio was sold and the new owner decided theatricals were not the way to go. Then the show was brought to the attention of Tom Markus, artistic director of the Virginia Museum Theater.

"He heard about the show and called us," Seff said. "Then he brought in Darwin Knight [director of several VMT musicals] because he was worried that the show was too big. Darwin came up with some better ways to do things, and that's how it happened."

All four see in the Richmond opening a rare opportunity. To have done the show on Broadway, dealing with 11 unions, theater rentals and the salary of star actors, would have cost a minimum of \$5 million, while the VMT budget for the whole season (seven plays) is just over \$1 million.

"What happens from here is anybody's guess," noted Seff. "We've gotten a lot of support from the power people in New York. Nobody has said they'll produce it, and nobody has given us \$3 million, but now we have something to show them. A lot of people will be coming down from New York, and we'll have to see what happens after that."

crostic puzzles, has made several that include Alger titles. Write her at the aforementioned address.

HAS member Pete Eckel writes that his newsboy program (see last issue) has received much publicity. He says that "the result of the news release on the 150th anniversary of the street newsboy was overwhelming. The following used the story: The Chicago Tribune, Editor and Publisher, News Tribune, Catholic N.Y., Quill, El Progresso, Staten Island Advance, Newsday, Home News, New York Press Association, New York Circulation Managers, and ABC TV News. Also to honor the newsboys, the Deadline Club is considering putting a plaque at Printing House Square. But sorry to say, I have been unsuccessful attracting sponsors. Any ideas?"

Gil Westgard sent in several photocopied pages from the 1900 book, Hints for Home Reading: A Series of Papers on Books and Their Use (edited with an introduction by Lyman Abbott). Alger's Ragged Dick and Tattered Tom Series were listed in the section on "Juveniles," with the first costing \$6.00 per set (H. T. Coates) and the second, composed of eight volumes to the other's six, costing \$8.00 (H. T. Coates). The introduction to the book states that "The following list of nearly 3,000 volumes has been selected from all departments of literature with a view to aiding in the building of a choice Home Library."

Ray Boas, 5 Roberts Ave., Haddonfield, N.J. 08033, has some books for sale. Edwin Hoyt's Horatio's Boys, with dust jacket, \$11.00; Struggling Upward and Other Works, with dust jacket, \$15.00; The Fiction Factory, no d.j., mark on back cover, \$18.00; Herbert R. Mayes' Alger: A Biography Without a Hero, no d.j. very good except the paper is cracked inside the rear flyleaf on the hinge, \$42.00.

Don't forget--the next convention will soon be here. The 20th annual meeting, hosted by Jim and Mary Jane Thorp, will be in Nashua, N. H.

PRESIDENTIAL CHIT CHAT by Bob Sawyer

Over the years we have often heard the old chestnut, "Save your Confederate money, the South will rise again!" This might be applied to the rapidly disappearing novels of Horatio Alger. The only place any great quantity of them can be seen is at our annual convention. Even there, few first editions, few excellent reprints are in evidence, and of course prices escalate in direct proportion to rarity.

Even the scorned NYB and Donahues, the Hursts and Winstons, even in poor condition, are being snapped up because a title is better than no title.

So rather than allow your collections to be sold or given away when you are finished with them, take the time and trouble to see that they end up in the hands of someone, preferably a Society member, who will treasure and care for them as a real fragment of Americana.

I make it a practice to write a letter to each of our new members after their names appear in Newsboy. I would like to ask all members to write a letter of greeting to anyone in their immediate area. Associations like this do much to bind our rather loosely-knit organization together and is frequently beneficial to both parties.

I still have about 25 of our Convention souvenirs. This is a 50+ page book telling of the beginnings of the Society, some of its history, a "Who's Who" of many of our members. It has one of Alger's first published articles, "Chivalry," and many other interesting facts and figures. The cost is \$10.00 postpaid, which goes directly into the Society treasury as the books are all paid for from the funds of the past convention.

Make plans now to attend our 20th annual convention in Nashua, New Hampshire, hosted by Jim and Mary Jane Thorp. See you there???

* * *

Bob Sawyer notes that in the last issue, PFO73's name is misspelled. It's Earl Unzicker, not Earl Unicker. Also, Paul North from Columbus, Ohio makes 52 members in attendance.

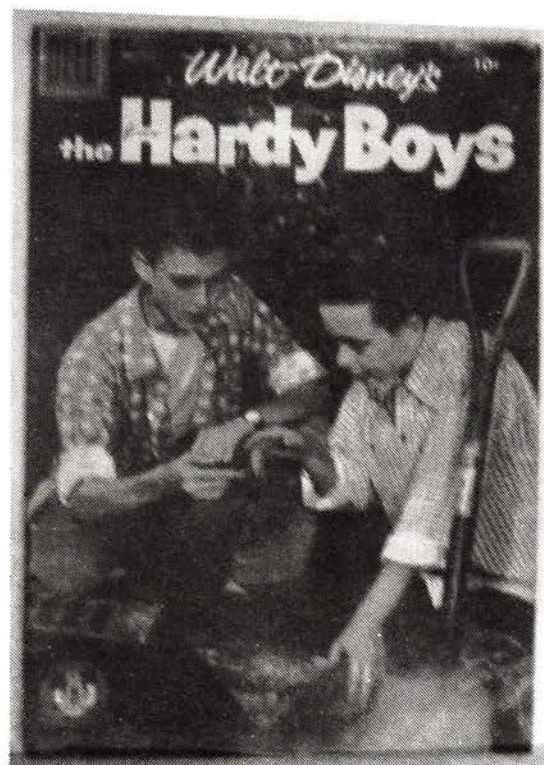
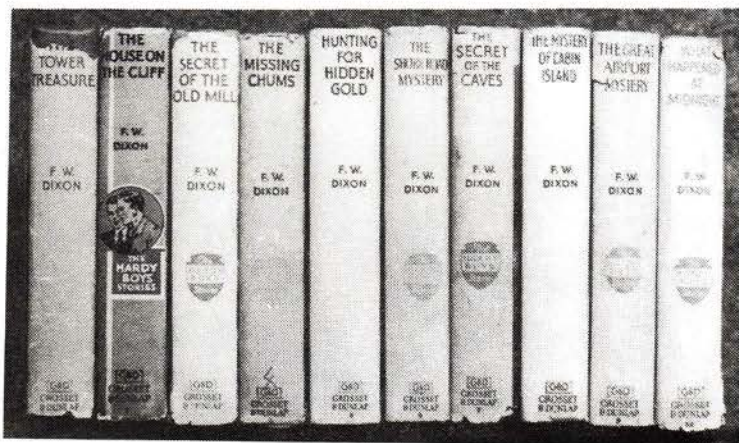
R. H. Hunt wrote Carl Hartmann the following note: "No, I haven't made you WAIT AND HOPE for my July due dues. And I haven't been forced to go DIGGING FOR GOLD or find a \$500 CHECK to enable me to enclose the \$15.00. I simply over-looked, and I apologize for the delay."

Louis Bodnar writes: "I read Bill Strong's interesting long letter in the latest Newsboy. Part of Bill's letter reminded me of the time we lived on a farm. I slept on a bed in the unfinished attic, and sometimes the wind would blow snow through the cracks. I had a big box nearly full with books, Buffalo Bill paperbacks, Alger paperbacks, etc. that I would read."

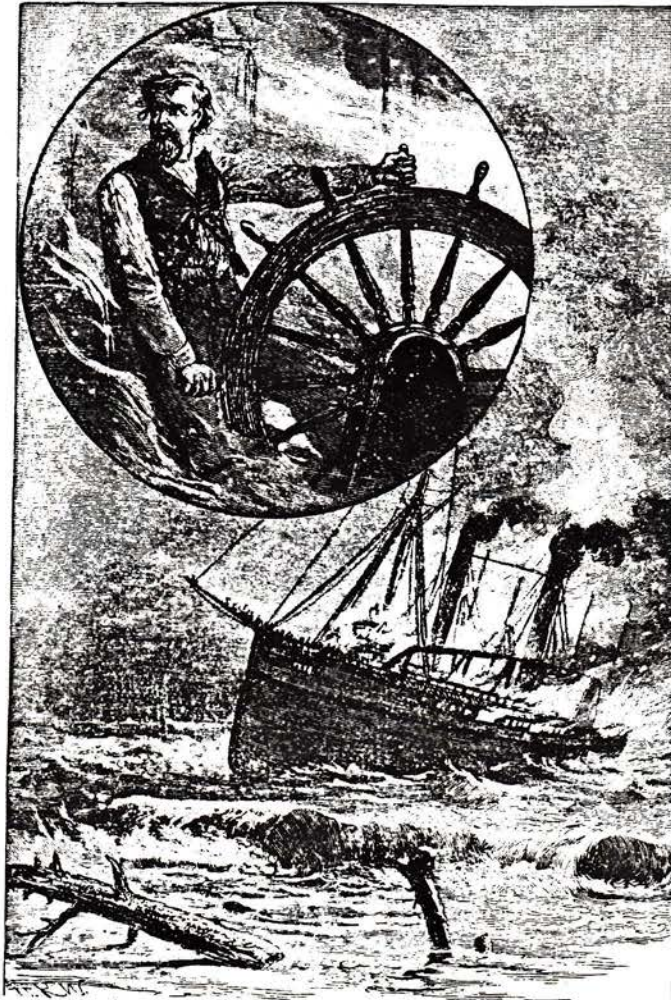
Newsboy (bi-m. \$10. Carl T. Hartman, 4907 Allison D., Lansing, MI. 48910). The official organ of the Horatio Alger Society consists of 24 offset pages of news notes, literary commentary, bibliographies, and general info about the writer and his books. One of the better author newsletters, this is carefully edited by Jack Bales, Readers Services Librarian at Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg.

The above is a review from the regular "Magazines" column in the October 15, 1983 issue of Library Journal. Professor Bill Katz of the School of Library Science, State University of New York in Albany, devoted his entire column to "Notable Newsletters." (I hope we get some library members from it)!

I recently found buried in my files an article I had intended to print earlier. It's a newspaper article featuring an interview with Brad Chase. Sorry for the delay, Brad--will use it next issue!



As many HAS members know, my current book interest is the Hardy Boys. I now have almost 100 volumes with dust jackets, including all of the early volumes in "white spine" d.js. Above are some of my books, and to the right is the cover of a Walt Disney comic book. My sincere thanks go to the numerous Society members who have helped me in my search over the years--they have turned up volumes and other collectable material all over the country. (I don't want to name names for fear of leaving somebody out). Just last month one friend discovered over a dozen volumes in literally MINT condition--just as they looked on a bookstore, with not one single tear in the dust jackets. A collector friend recently wrote to tell me how he picked up for his own collection six books, each with d.j., for only a dollar apiece. Please send in YOUR "collecting story for use in Newsboy!!



"Stand by the wheel five minutes yet,
And we will reach the shore."

"With God's good help, I will."

We're all familiar with Alger's poem, "John Maynard," which has been reprinted countless times in numerous publications. Gil Westgard sent in a copy that appeared in Sheldon's Modern School Fifth Reader, published in 1882. Above is the illustration that accompanied the poem.