



THE HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY
OFFICIAL PUBLICATION
NEWSBOY



Horatio Alger, Jr.

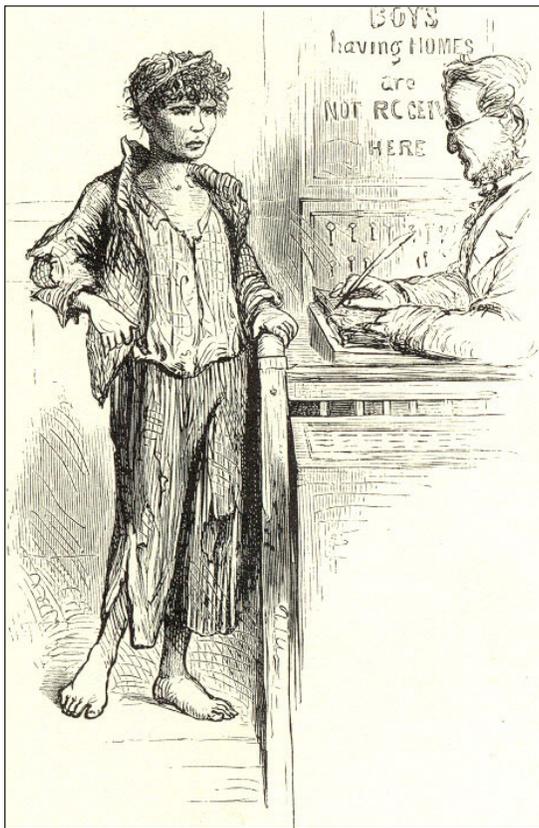
1832 – 1899

A magazine devoted to the study of Horatio Alger, Jr., his life, works, and influence on the culture of America.

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The Gentle Boy from the Dangerous Classes

— *Conclusion*

-- See Page 7

H.A.S. repository: An update from NIU

-- See Page 5

An early look at the 2007 convention

-- See Page 3

President's column

It is not too soon to start planning for the 2007 convention. There is now a link on the Horatio Alger Society home page to a convention sub-page (www.ihot.com/~has/al01100.htm) that allows 2007 convention attendees to pay their registration fees via PayPal.

The convention fee is \$85.00, same as last year. Bob Sipes has indicated that he will absorb the PayPal fee, but I am sure Bob will not object if you include an extra dollar to help cover this cost.

You can view Bob and Wendy's latest baby (Sofia) pictures on the H.A.S. Web site archive page (the password is "newsboy").

Barry Schoenborn sent me the following interesting link: http://pages.prodigy.net/arkent/_import/pages.prodigy.net/arkent/index8.html

This Web page contains tips, dos and don'ts for buying Mark Twain books on line (especially auctions). Barry went on to suggest that a similar page on buying Alger books on line would be very useful on our web site. In true presidential fashion, I approved Barry's idea and promptly delegated him to put together a buying tips Web page.

So, please e-mail Barry (barry@wvswrite.com) all of your tips and anecdotes regarding shopping for, and buying Alger books (I have a few cautionary tales to send Barry). And it doesn't have to be just pointers on buying Alger books online: buying Alger books in open stores or at live auctions have their own pitfalls.

Those of you who were at the 2005 convention at Grand Rapids may remember the presentation given by Vernon Wiering, a book restoration specialist.

I have since had Vernon repair and restore a number of my books and am very happy with his work. Vernon has kindly consented to allow us to link our Web page to his (this link is on the H.A.S. home page). And while we are on the subject, please e-mail me any book binders or book restoration professionals that you can recommend, and I'll create a sub-page with their contact information (if they are agreeable to this).

If you are an eBay seller, you can automatically donate part of your item's final sale price to a certified nonprofit organization. This donation is tax deductible. I'm working to get the H.A.S. onto eBay's certified nonprofit list. I'll have more to say on this topic in the next President's Column.

One more eBay-related item: Whenever I list an Alger

(Continued on Page 3)

HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

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 — youngsters whose struggles epitomized the Great American Dream and inspired hero ideals in countless millions of young Americans for generations to come.

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Membership applications, renewals, changes of address and other correspondence should be sent to **Horatio Alger Society, P.O. Box 70361, Richmond, VA 23255**.

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Newsboy ad rates: Full page, \$32.00; one-half page, \$17.00; one-quarter page, \$9.00; per column inch (1 inch deep by approx. 3 1/2 inches wide), \$2.00. Send ads, with check payable to Horatio Alger Society, P.O. Box 70361, Richmond, VA 23255.

The above rates apply to all want ads, along with ads offering non-Alger books for sale. However, it is the policy of the Horatio Alger Society to promote the exchange of Alger books and related Alger materials by providing space **free of charge** to our members for the **sale only** of such material. Send ads or "Letters to the Editor" to **Newsboy** editor William R. Gowen (PF-706) at 23726 N. Overhill Dr., Lake Zurich, IL 60047. E-mail: hasnewsboy@aol.com

An early look at the 2007 convention

By Bob Sipes (PF-1067)

With the advent of the new year upon us, it is time to look forward to the 2007 Horatio Alger Society convention to be held in Shelbyville, Indiana. The 43rd annual convention, "Seeking Fortune in Shelbyville," is well on its way to reality.

Due to event scheduling conflicts, the convention has been moved to May 17–20, 2007. The advantages of moving the convention back two weeks is warmer weather, and for those interested in open-wheel racing, the cars will be running at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in preparation for the Indy 500 later in the month.

Wendy and I have selected the Lees Inn in Shelbyville as the convention hotel, with a special rate of \$58.00 for a queen double, king single, or an executive suite (includes small sitting room). Please make your reservations early, as I am sure the executive suites will go fast, and mention the Horatio Alger Society when making the reservation to receive the discounted room rate. The Lees Inn's direct phone number is (317) 392-2299.

The convention registration fee will remain the same as recent conventions, at \$85.00. You may view the Horatio Alger Society Web site for additional details, links, and instructions on paying the convention fee via PayPal (optional). Mike Morley has provided additional information, including the registration link for the convention, in his *President's column* on Page 2.

Wendy is working hard to line up great food and atmosphere, and I am writing about the historical aspects and activities of the Shelbyville area for the next issue of *Newsboy*. I am also working with other members of the Society to acquire nice items for the book auction. Wendy and I will be hosting an open house at our home for all attendees.

Watch for additional information in the next issue of



The atrium lobby of the Lees Inn, Shelbyville Indiana, which will host the Horatio Alger Society convention on May 17-20, 2007.

Photo by Bill Gowen

Newsboy. Wendy and I are working hard to make "Seeking Fortune in Shelbyville" a success and hope to see you all this coming May!

President's column

(Continued from Page 2)

item on eBay, I include a link to our Web site in the item description inviting the prospective bidder to visit our Home page. I encourage all of you who sell Alger books on eBay to do the same. If you are unsure of how to embed a link in your item description, I'd be happy to set this up for you.

On the personal front, Edwin Antosik, Janice's dad, passed away on December 1. Ed was a decorated WW II vet (Pacific theatre), and was a kind and gentle man. Ed

was much beloved by family and friends, and we will miss him.

Janice and I wish you all a safe and joyous Christmas, Chanukah, or whatever (I never much cared for wishing someone "Happy holidays"), and a Happy New Year full of good health, family, friends ... and books!

Your Partic'lar Friend,
Michael Morley
1891 Colt Lane
Gardnerville, NV 89410
Phone: (775) 265-3063
E-mail: mmorley@carsonvalleybooks.com

Editor's notebook

As Vice President Larry Rice reports on Page 5, we enjoyed a very informative meeting on Nov. 4 with Lynne Thomas, curator of Rare Books and Special Collections at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb. President Mike Morley was unable to attend due to illness in his family, and he reports in his *President's column* the passing of his father-in-law on Dec. 1.

Edwin Antosik was a World War II veteran, and his death reminds us that we are losing America's "Greatest Generation" at a rate of more than a thousand a day. When the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association held its 65th anniversary reunion in Hawaii on Dec. 7, most of their dwindling number said this was likely their final get-together, that a 70th reunion is unlikely.

So if you send your condolences to Janice on the loss of her father, remember that he served our country with distinction in addition to being a wonderful family man.

We still were well represented at DeKalb, with Larry Rice, immediate past president Bob Routhier and executive director Rob Kasper, along with directors Brad Chase, Bob Sipes and Kyoko Amano, as well as myself.

Also present at the meeting, along with Lynne Thomas, were Angie Schroeder, NIU Senior Library Specialist/Rare Books; and Chalermsee Olson, Interim Associate Dean for Collections and Technical Services. The search process for the new Dean of Libraries continues, as Art Young (PF-941) has moved with his wife, Pat, into a life of retirement in beautiful New Hampshire (a region of the country I try to visit each year).

Lynne has promised me that she is preparing an article for the next issue of *Newsboy*, filling in information not included in Larry's write-up. Incidentally, Larry asked me to flesh out some details of the meeting, and thanks to the world of cyberspace, I had the full text of Lynne's PowerPoint presentation at my disposal thanks to Bob Sipes, who had downloaded a Flash copy on his laptop. When sending me the article Larry said "I'm not a professional writer," but he was being modest. I think you'll find the article very informative. Also, as Larry mentions, Lynne plans to attend our convention in May in Shelbyville, Indiana.

One piece of business discussed at the meeting not included in Larry's article is a project created by Brad Chase and Bob Routhier aimed at filling in the gaps of the H.A.S. Repository for its Alger reprint collections. Brad has sent me a preliminary draft of an article for *Newsboy* prepared by Bob and himself, titled "Forty-

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Horatio Alger Society
P.O. Box 70361
Richmond, VA 23255

William Gowen:

I can not begin to tell you how surprised and pleased I was to receive a copy of the *Newsboy*, July-August issue, and find "Drumbeat at Trenton," by Capwell Wyckoff.

Frank Quillen and David Baumann's interest in my father's stories is amazing. Thank you for getting this in print after all these years.

Could I please order 2 additional copies of that issue to send to family members that live away from me?

Sincerely,
Ginger Wyckoff Chapman

Send all Letters to the Editor to Horatio Alger Society, 23726 N. Overhill Drive, Lake Zurich, IL 60047 (regular mail) or by e-mail to: hasnewsboy@aol.com

Six Missing Titles; or, Let's Adopt a Format." It covers four formats of A.L. Burt's Chimney Corner Series (Capped Head Format), of which the NIU library is missing 46 of a grand total of some 344 in five cover designs (NIU has a complete run of one of the five formats), and the other four formats are missing 9 to 14 titles out of a potential 69 books in each.

We'll let Bob and Brad explain "Adopt a Format" more fully in their article, including the plan they have come up with to hopefully help the H.A.S. Repository fill in as many of these gaps as possible.

Moving on to other topics, I hope you will be able to attend the 2007 H.A.S. convention in Shelbyville, which is located about a half-hour drive southeast of Indianapolis on Interstate 74. The Indianapolis Airport is 35-40 minutes away, and you can even fly into Cincinnati, which is less than 90 minutes' drive farther east on I-74. In future issues of *Newsboy*, convention host Bob Sipes will provide details on traveling to the convention, along with information on places to see and visit in Shelbyville, Indianapolis and the region.

I stopped at the Lees Inn, located at Exit 116 on I-74, in late October, and can easily give the hotel a thumb's up. While not as large a hotel as the last two years in Grand Rapids and Omaha, it certainly is a bargain at \$58 per night (plus tax). And the local hotel tax is much lower

(Continued on Page 15)

From the Vice President's corner

On Nov. 4, a meeting was held at Northern Illinois University's Founders Memorial Library in DeKalb for an update on the status of the Horatio Alger, Jr. Repository. In attendance were H.A.S. members Rob Kasper, Bob Sipes, Bill Gowen, Kyoko Amano, Brad Chase, Bob Routhier and myself.

Lynne Thomas, NIU's Rare Books and Special Collections department head, made an excellent PowerPoint presentation on the status and future of the Alger Repository and answered numerous questions.

The first, and probably the most interesting subject, was "Catalogues vs. Bibliographies." Lynne explained that a *catalog* is used to find ANY edition of a particular work by a particular author, while a *bibliography* helps subject specialists and collectors differentiate particular copies (issues) and particular editions (including first editions) by a particular author.

She explained how each is used and answered our many questions in great detail, noting that "current national cataloging rules specifically state that a catalog record is not a descriptive bibliographical entry, and shouldn't aspire to be."

Lynne added that NIU's Online Catalog is available for accessing the University's Rare Books and Special Collections (www.ulib.niu.edu/dept-rare.cfm). She said that (a), specific series are searchable in the Online Catalog; (b), multiple copies of the same edition are on the same record; and (c), donors are listed on the record, allowing for the searching of particular collections.

Another important point was that the NIU library is there to help us, with Lynne emphasizing "Ask a librarian!" In other words, if collectors desire to verify first-edition points or would like to compare copies of a book, she and her staff are available by phone at (815) 753-9838, or by clicking on the "Ask a Librarian" link at the above Web address.

"I use the bibliographies on hand (Gardner, Bennett, Chase, etc.) if you do not have one," she said. "It's helpful if you search the Online Catalog first. Giving me a book's call number first speeds up the process."

Further topics presented were on purchasing collections, donations, the library's handling of duplicates, along with discussions on dust jackets, first editions and Alger ephemera.

Perhaps the subject resulting in the most discussion was the Horatio Alger Society Repository Endowment Fund. This was established in 1996, and one of its benefits is the availability from generated interest for an



Northern Illinois University's Founders Memorial Library, DeKalb, Ill.

Northern Illinois University photo

annual research grant available to a qualified graduate student to use for Alger-related studies.

Lynne noted that as of November 2006 the principal in the endowment fund was \$41,480.25, and that the interest generated for 2006-07 was \$3,907, which from the latter was provided a \$2,000 grant to the latest Horatio Alger Fellowship recipient, Sara Berrey, from the University of Minnesota, along with \$1,901.99 for purchases to the Alger Repository collection.

Lynne noted that the budget for the purchase of collections is tight, and though the Alger repository is always interested in adding to the collection, individual purchases must be handled on a case-by-case basis.

"To determine whether a particular purchase is desirable, we would like collectors to provide lists, whenever possible, to be compared to our current holdings," she said.

The Alger repository will accept gifts of books or collections, and that any of all books donated to Northern Illinois University Libraries may NOT legally be sold once formally accepted into the collections (accessioned), because they become state property at that point. Items may only be withdrawn from the library's special collections for a specific group of reasons, such as condition or being horribly out of date (the latter not applicable to the H.A.S. repository materials).

Duplicates were another interesting topic. After describing a duplicate as "the exact edition, printing and issue as another item in the repository," Lynne noted that there are typically two times in the life cycle of a gift when duplicates are typically dealt with. The first is at the time of donation, and the second is after two years.

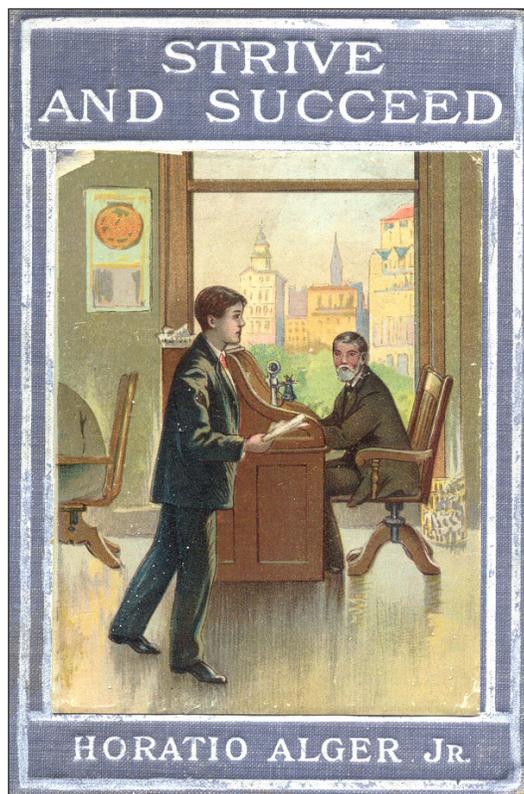
"Because it is difficult to dispose of duplicates or undesirable copies *after* accepting a gift, as curator I prefer to have the right of refusal for materials *before* they enter

(Continued on Page 6)

Strive and Succeed Award

The Horatio Alger Society appreciates the generosity of its members in donating to the H.A.S. **Strive and Succeed Award** fund. The **Strive and Succeed Award** is presented each spring at the annual convention to a deserving high school senior to help defray his or her college expenses. These Partic'lar Friends made contributions during calendar year 2006:

John D. Arnold (PF-1042)
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 Ralph J. Carlson (PF-955)
 Bradford S. Chase (PF-412)
 Ivan A. Conger (PF-386)
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 Nell Wright (PF-639)
 Carl E. Wulff (PF-900)
 Arthur P. Young (PF-941)

*A note on matching gifts: Members planning to make a donation for 2007 may want to check with their employers to see whether they sponsor programs through which contributions to not-for-profit organizations are matched in kind. If you have recently made a **Strive and Succeed Award** donation and your name does not appear on this list, we will publish your donation as being made in calendar year 2007.*

From the Vice President's corner

(Continued from Page 5)

the collection," she said, adding that sorting and verifying duplicates as a very time-consuming process.

"I am happy to work with donors to place your Alger-related materials in another repository if we determine that they are not appropriate for NIU's collection because of duplication, etc.," Lynne said. "Placing our duplicates in other, similar, repositories, builds good will between libraries, as well as providing more possi-

bilities for Alger research around the country."

To contact Lynne Thomas at NIU, her direct phone line is (815) 753-0255, and e-mail lthomas@niu.edu.

Lynne has offered to attend our 2007 convention in Indiana and make a presentation to the attendees and be available for questions. We appreciate Lynne and her staff for offering several hours of their time on a Saturday, and providing a great lunch.

Well done!

Your Partic'lar Friend,
 Larry Rice (PF-757)

The Gentle Boy from the Dangerous Classes

Conclusion

By Michael Moon, Ph. D.

“The Fashionable Newsboy at Home”: Alger’s Reformulation of the Domestic Ideal

“The idea of a fashionable newsboy! It’s ridiculous!”
—Alger, *Herbert Carter’s Legacy* (1875)

Having attracted the attention and favor of a genteel man with his unmistakable good looks, and having in turn been “seduced” by the warm concern of a rich boy into embracing genteel aspirations, Alger’s prototypical hero begins his transformation from “dangerous” child/vagrant into “gentle” youth.

That Alger’s books are not only homoerotic romances but also represent a genuine reformulation of popular domestic fiction is made evident by the regularity and narrative intensity with which the tales highlight the boy hero’s moving from the street or from a transitional charity shelter into his own modest little home (usually a boardinghouse room).¹⁹

That this transition is perhaps the most crucial in the boy’s development is manifested in the elaborate care that Alger expends on discriminating the fine points of comparative domestic amenities at this point in his narratives. Once his boy hero reaches the point of setting up a little home of his own, Alger, otherwise often vague about “realistic” detail, shows himself to be as astute a recorder of the differences between the four or five lowest grades of boardinghouses as Balzac could have wished to be.

Having negotiated shifting one type of social construction of themselves (“dangerous”) for another

Originally published as Michael Moon, “‘The Gentle Boy from the Dangerous Classes’: Pederasty, Domesticity, and Capitalism in Horatio Alger,” from Representations 19 (Summer 1987): 87-110. Copyright ©1987 by the Regents of the University of California. Reprinted with the permission of the University of California Press. Professor Moon is on the English faculty at Johns Hopkins University. His areas of research are in American literature and gender studies.



“THIS IS YOUR LEGACY, HERBERT.”

Herbert Carter’s Legacy, Page 62.

(“gentle”), Alger’s heroes, in their culminating move into private lodgings, undertake the project of shifting another set of social constructions — those of gender identity and family role.

As I have discussed above, gender confusion is thematized extensively in the street phases of Alger’s tales only in the case of the female street boy, Tattered Tom. As long as he remains a poor boy on the streets, the Alger hero’s behavior remains fairly conventionally gender bound. But once the “gentle boy” is removed from the street and street occupations and is placed in a private, at least minimally genteel domestic setting, he and his boy friends begin to differentiate themselves along (for boys of Alger’s day, or of our own) highly unconventional gender-role lines. For example, as soon as fifteen-year-old (formerly Ragged) Dick can manage it, he moves his twelve-year-old friend Henry Fosdick (their very names suggesting they somehow belong together) into his lodgings with him. The two boys share a cult of domestic comfort and respectability that in

(Continued on Page 8)

The Gentle Boy from the Dangerous Classes

(Continued from Page 7)

many ways conforms to the standards of simplicity, cleanliness, and efficiency set in Alger's time ideologues of "scientific" domesticity like Catharine Beecher.²⁰ As it is in her work, the Alger hero's first real home, like the poor but decent lodgings Dick and Fosdick take on Mott Street, is a man's refuge from the demands of the marketplace and an appropriately ordered decor in which for him to pursue self-improvement.²¹

Dick and his friend and roommate Fosdick inaugurate the second major phase of their joint ascent by moving from their extremely modest digs in Mott

St. to a more pleasant place uptown on Bleecker St. These are the opening lines of the sequel to *Ragged Dick*:

"Well, Fosdick, this is a little better than our old room in Mott St.," said Richard Hunter, looking complacently about him.

"You're right, Dick," said his friend. "This carpet's rather nicer than the ragged one Mrs. Mooney supplied us with. The beds are neat and comfortable, and I feel better satisfied, even if we do have to pay twice as much for it."

The room which yielded so much satisfaction to the two boys was on the fourth floor of a boarding-house in Bleecker Street. No doubt many of my young readers, who are accustomed to elegant homes, would think it very plain; but neither Richard nor his friend had been used to anything as good. They had been thrown upon their own exertions at an early age, and [had] had a hard battle to fight with poverty and ignorance. Those of my readers who are familiar with Richard Hunter's experiences when he was "Ragged Dick" will easily understand what a great rise in the world it was for him to have a really respectable home. (*Fame and Fortune*, 9-10)

The Bleecker Street boarding-house that is the boys' second home together is relatively luxurious; the narrator contrasts it with the minimal, unfastidious amenities that have been available to them back on Mott St.: "There once a fortnight was thought sufficient to change the sheets, while both boys were expected to use the same towel, and make that last a week" (52).

The practical, quotidian ideals of the domestic ideology in its "scientific" and privatizing aspect (a clean and comfortable home that serves as both a haven from the world and a suitable environment for continuous self-improvement) seem entirely congenial to Alger.

Other aspects of the conventional domestic ideal that had come into being in the two or three decades preceding, such as its rigid polarization of gender roles, seem considerably less congenial to him. In order to consider



"PLEASE, SIR, MAY I HAVE A BED?" (A sketch from life)

From Charles Loring Brace, *The Dangerous Classes of New York, and Twenty Years Among Them*. New York: Wynkoop & Hallenbeck, 1872; reprinted, n.d., by the National Association of Social Workers, Washington, D.C., *NASW Classic Series*, facing Page 223.

how Alger represents these matters, one must attend not to those attitudes that Dick and Fosdick share, like their desire to live as "respectably" as they possibly can afford to, but those characteristics of either boy by means of which the text differentiates, and indeed to some degree dichotomizes (although not nearly as far as other domestic definers of gender roles would have done), their respective personalities.

Alger characterizes the younger boy, Fosdick, as a sweet, timid, quiet and clever boy, obviously the stereotypically feminine version of the "gentle boy" type, in contrast with the stereotypically masculine Dick, who is thoroughly "gentle" in Alger's ambiguous sense (handsome, kind, nurturant, and, to all appearances, born with embryonic genteel values despite his actual origins in poverty) but is also self-confident, "handy," and generally competent in the realm of what Alger's

culture defined as masculine affairs. The significant twist on the gender-role stereotypes in this representative tale of Alger's is that it is Dick, the "dominant" type of these two gentle boys, who plays the maternal role in Alger's version of domesticity and not, as one might expect, the "feminine" character Fosdick.

The relationship between the dominant boy in the maternal role and his partner (for example, Dick and Fosdick, respectively, in the first three volumes of the *Ragged Dick* series) is thoroughly familial; so much so, in fact, that Alger specifies (another significant example of his uncharacteristic precision about detail) that nine months after the two boys move in together ("at the end of nine months, therefore, or thirty-nine weeks"; chapter 20, "Nine Months Later," *Ragged Dick*, 166), Dick is said to bring forth a little bundle — a nest egg of \$117 that has accumulated in his new savings account. But fascinating as the nursing of this nest egg is depicted as being for both boys, they eventually acquire a real human child: in the third volume of the series they adopt a small beggar boy to round out their family, and they make available to him in his turn the experiences — primarily domestic ones — that have aided their own earlier transformations from "dangerous but gentle" street boys to young gentlemen and members of an ideal, genteel, all-boy family.

This fantasmatic family serves as a lingering ideal in Alger's books, but, as he depicts it, it is a far from stable unit.²² For example, *Mark the Match Boy*, the adopted "son" of Dick and Fosdick, is revealed at novel's end to be the missing and long-sought-for grandson of a rich merchant from Milwaukee. The old man rewards Dick and Fosdick handsomely for fostering the boy, who is then removed to Milwaukee to enjoy the life of the grandson of a rich gentleman. Dick and Fosdick revert to nursing a now considerably enlarged nest egg.

Dick's intermittent maternity toward his "nest egg" and his temporary ward Mark, and the essential interchangeability of "baby" and capital in this scheme — the last in the series of transformations I have been describing — requires consideration in relation to one final aspect of domesticity in Alger, and that is the all-important habit of "saving."

Good looks combined with other virtues — honesty, enterprise, male homosociability — are all qualifications for "good fortune" in the forms this takes in Alger. But once the hero begins to "rise" and achieves a modicum of domestic stability, the activity or habit that is represented as being indispensable to maintaining his personal ascendancy is that of "saving." It is by saving, i.e., thriftily and systematically accumulating bits of capital, that Dick produces his nest egg; it is by virtue of these habits that he shows himself to be a fit parent (mother) for Mark; and it is his "saving — by rescuing

from dead-end poverty — first Fosdick and then Mark that the cycle of ascent is renewed in the series. Just as Dick has been saved in order to learn to "save" himself, so will he save younger boys and provide them a model of "saving" both money and still more boys. This religion of accumulating (saving) both money and other boys is ubiquitous in Alger:

The disposition to save is generally the first encouraging symptom in a street boy, and shows that he has really a desire to rise above his circumstances, and gain a respectable position in the world. (*Mark the Match Boy*, 293)

Of greater value than the [monetary] sum. . . was the habit of self-denial and saving which our hero had formed. (*Risen from the Ranks*, 141)

Boys who have formed so good a habit of saving can be depended upon. (*Fame and Fortune*, 11)

"All labor is respectable, my lad, and you have no cause to be ashamed of any honest business; yet when you can get something to do that promises better for your future prospects, I advise you to do so. Till then earn your living in the way you are accustomed to, avoid extravagance, and save up a little money if you can." (*Ragged Dick*, 109)

It is in the "saving" (i.e., salvific) habit of "saving" money and other boys that Alger's work represents its cycle of transformations — street boy into "gentle" boy, newly "gentle" boy into domestic partner and foster parent (mother), capital into baby and baby back into further capital — reaching a state of equilibrium: at the end of the narrative, there lies ahead for Alger's heroes a static future of endlessly pursuing the two "saving" projects (i.e., of money and other boys).

I want now to consider the question of what is being "saved" in Alger's fantasmatic no-loss chain of transformations and exchanges, the process that begins at the lowest end of his society — at an isolated ragged boy — and extracts from this supposedly unpromising figure the particular combination of virtues and powers normally ascribed to his remote social superiors — gentility, domesticity, wealth, philanthropy.

"Taking an Interest": The Art of Saving Boys

As became apparent in the last section, the salvaging operation ongoing in Alger's writing is a complex one. In each book, a boy is "saved from ruin," from possibly becoming a criminal or a derelict, by being fostered as a candidate for recruitment into the petty bourgeoisie. Furthermore, an outmoded model of virtue (thrift,

(Continued on Page 10)

The Gentle Boy from the Dangerous Classes

(Continued from Page 9)

probity, self-restraint, ambition, hard work — “the Protestant work ethic”) is reformulated to correspond more closely to the requirements of changed social and economic conditions: aspiring to and finally reaching the kind of low-level clerical position that brings “respectable” social status as well as access to a modest array of consumer “goodies” to its holder is presented as being a high moral achievement.

What is ultimately being saved or recuperated in Alger’s writing, though, is something more primal than the notion of the worldly efficacy of a certain combination of virtues: it is a belief that a kind of “magic” acts to secure his boy heroes in the corporate/capitalist network. As I have discussed earlier in this essay, critics of Alger have often decried the regularity with which an experience of sheer “luck sets his boy heroes on their way, rather than some experience like a recognition of the workings in their world of some consistent notion of “character” or “self-making.” It is crucial to notice in this regard that the ritualistic “lucky break” that initiates the boy’s rising usually takes the form of his attracting the attention of a well-to-do male patron, usually through some spontaneous exhibition of his physical strength and daring.

The “magic trick” that the Alger text ultimately performs is to recuperate the possibility of a man’s taking an intense interest in an attractive boy without risking being vilified or persecuted for doing so — indeed, this “interest” is taken in a manner that is

made thoroughly congruent with the social requirements of corporate capitalism on the sides of both parties: boy and potential employer alike “profit” from it.

Alger’s 1876 *Sam’s Chance; and How He Improved It*, in the second Tattered Tom series, provides a representative example of this in the interactions of fifteen-year-old Henry, a clerk in a shipping company, and his employer, James Hamilton. Although Henry is said not to be aware that Hamilton favors him or is even aware of his presence in the firm, the narrator relates that the older man has been “observing him [Henry] carefully, fully determined to serve him in the future if he should deserve it” (89). One day, after four years in the firm, Henry is called into Hamilton’s office, where his employer interviews him about how he manages his life and his small income, and then, pleased with what he learns, invites the boy to make a substantial investment in a shipping venture the firm is about to undertake:

Henry stared at his employer in surprise. How could he, a boy with thirty-five dollars capital, join in such an enterprise?

“I don’t see how I can,” he replied. “I am afraid you take me for a capitalist.”

“So you are,” said his employer. “Have you not money in the bank?”

Henry smiled. (93)

Hamilton encourages Henry to participate in the venture, saying he will take the boy’s savings bank book (with thirty-five dollars in the account) as security. “Thirty-five dollars will pay a year’s interest on the five hundred dollars I lend you; so my interest is secure,” Hamilton tells him. “I am willing to take the risk,” the older man tells him (twice) to counter Henry’s anxieties about becoming his “partner” (94-95). Henry finally happily agrees to the transaction and rises to leave Hamilton’s office with the words, “Thank you, sir. I am very grateful to you for your kind interest in me.”

With Hamilton’s “interest” in Henry thus firmly secured, three months come and go, during which period nothing passes between man and boy except frequent “pleasant word[s] or smile[s]” (107). Henry is then called back into Hamilton’s office, and their talk immediately turns to their mutual “interest”: “I have just received a statement of [the outcome of the shipping venture],” Hamilton tells Henry, “and as you are interested, I have called you in to let you know how it has turned out.” Henry is delighted to learn his investment has earned him a hundred dollars. The following conversation ensues:

“I shall charge you interest on the five hundred dollars you borrowed of me, at the rate of seven per cent. You have had the use of the money for three months.”

“Then the interest will amount to eight dollars and three quarters,” said Henry, promptly.

“Quite right; you are very quick at reckoning,” said Mr. Hamilton, looking pleased.

“That is not a difficult sum,” answered Henry, modestly.

“I did not suppose you knew much about computing interest. You left school very young, did you not?”

“At twelve, sir.”

“You had not studied interest then, had you?”

“No, sir; I have studied it since.”

“At evening school?”

“No, sir; I study by myself in the evening.”

“How long have you done that?”

“For two years.”

“And you keep it up regularly?”

“Yes, sir; occasionally I take an evening for myself, but I average five evenings a week at studying.”

“You are a remarkable boy,” said the merchant, looking surprised.

“If you flatter me, sir, I may grow self-conceited,” said Henry, smiling. (108-9)

Once again, a mutually “profitable” encounter leaves Henry “smiling” and Hamilton looking “surprised” and “pleased,” their “partnership” fulfilled. The boy has proven himself to be as quick and expert a computer of “interest” as his merchant employer; with a little further education in calculating “risk,” one suspects, he will have little more to learn from Hamilton. (In their crucial first nine months together, *Ragged Dick* is said to learn everything from Fosdick that he has to teach, which includes reading, writing, and “arithmetic as far as Interest” (167).

The recognition and avowal of “interest — one’s own in other men and theirs in oneself — and the close study of calculation and risk in pursuing these “interests” are matters that have figured as highly problematic and emotionally charged concerns in male homosexual behavior in homophobic capitalist culture. As Michael Pollak has written of the institutions of the “sexual market” of the gay ghetto (bars, baths, cinemas, and so on), as these functioned between the time of the emergence of gay liberation in Western metropolises at the beginning of the 1970s and the decline of “casual

sex” practices among many gay men in recent years in response to the AIDS epidemic: “Of all the different types of masculine sexual behavior, homosexuality is undoubtedly the one whose functioning is most strongly suggestive of a market, in which in the last analysis one orgasm is bartered for another.”²³

As is evident from passages like the dialogue from *Sam’s Chance* quoted above, the network of calculation, risk, and interest that binds males together in Alger’s work is a complex one; the economic workings of the quasisexual marketplace of these “boys’ books” leaves the crude barter system described by Pollak far behind.

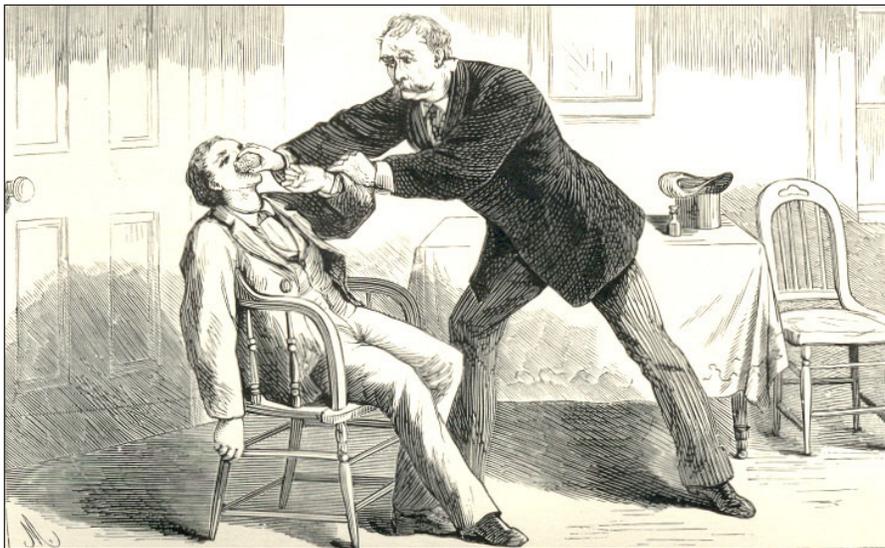
At a representative moment in an earlier entry in the *Tattered Tom* series, *Paul the Peddler*, distinctions between the boy hero or his body and corporate economic forms vanish; as Paul considers how to come up with thirty-five dollars to buy out another boy’s

necktie stand, the narrator observes:

If Paul had been a railroad corporation, he might have issued first mortgage bonds at a high rate of interest, payable in gold, and negotiated them through some leading banker. But he was not much versed in financial schemes, and therefore was at a loss. (164)

Paul’s being “at a loss” is a circumstance that “gets worse before it gets better”; his case provides a typical example of the way in which the networks of interest between males in Alger’s fiction can be disrupted by the incursion of the feminine — a quality that is frequently represented in these stories as being equivalent to (in readily recognizable infantile-fantasy form) the quality of anality.

Paul becomes involved in a series of misadventures when he attempts to sell a valuable “ring” his mother has found and given him to provide the capital for his “rise.” A con man named Montgomery who poses as “a jeweler from Syracuse” is said to overhear “with evident interest” a conversation between Paul and another boy about this ring. The man



CHLOROFORMING PAUL

Paul the Peddler. Page 186.

steps forward and avows his “interest in examining” and possibly buying Paul’s ring; permitted to do so, he pronounces it “handsome” and valuable, and invites the boy to his hotel room to complete the transaction (199-200). Once at the hotel (called “Lovejoy’s”), Montgomery grabs Paul and applies a sponge soaked in chloroform to his nose until the boy passes out. “Eyeing the insensible boy with satisfaction,” he seizes the ring and flees (208-9).

Alger’s fictions never allow such disruptions of the networks of male interest by the incursion of what it represents as the feminine/anal — a position of jeopardy into which every “gentle boy” can at least potentially be forced — to become more than temporary: Paul recovers his ring and completes his sale of it, then deposits most of the proceeds with his gentleman patron, who promises him “interest” on it (295). When the con man is sent off

(Continued on Page 12)

The Gentle Boy from the Dangerous Classes

(Continued from Page 11)

to Sing Sing after being convicted of assaulting and robbing Paul, according to the narrative, even the man's wife is said to be indifferent: "As the compact between her and her husband was one of interest rather than of affection, her grief at his confinement is not very deep" (304). Compacts of interest between man and wife, the narrative leads us to assume, are ignoble, but between man and boy "on the market," there is no comparably invidious distinction to be drawn between mutual "interest" and "affection": they come to the same thing, and both qualities are estimable.

Older men who might (but actually do not) stand in relation to Alger's boy heroes as fathers may "take an interest" in them that may eventuate (as we have seen) in actions as various as respectful advancement or rape, but none of these interactions with older men on the boys' part leaves any permanent trace in the lives of the boy characters except in the form of yet another accession of capital. Domestic arrangements are formed between boy and boy, but relations between man and boy remain casual, intermittent, and extradomestic: the "rise" of Alger's hero is fostered by "interested" older patrons, but (the informing, contradictory fantasy runs) the boy remains entirely self-fathering.

Alger's particular version of the "self-made man" takes the form of this "self-made" all-boy family that the boy protagonist generates with his money. This version of domesticity, as I have suggested above, derives from the infantile-fantasy equivalence that the stories propose between femininity and anality. Drawing on the succinct psychoanalysis of the "magic-dirt" complex that Norman O. Brown makes in *Life Against Death*, I would argue that Alger's writing denies sexual difference — and privileges the figure of the formerly "dirty" boy-turned-gentle over figures of other age, gender, and class positions — "in the interest" of promoting this particular notion of self-making, of simultaneous self-mothering and self-fathering, that it takes over from capitalist culture:

The infantile fantasy of becoming father of oneself first moves out to make magic use of objects instead of its own body when it gets attached to that object which both is and is not part of its own body, the feces. Money inherits the infantile magic of excrement and then is able to breed and have children: interest is an increment.²⁴

Alger's all-boy families merely imitate the extraordinary propensities for self-reproduction, for apparently

asexual breeding, that they are represented as discovering already ongoing in their first accumulations of capital. The chain of "magical" transformations I have charted in Alger's writing from ragged to gentle boy by way of a series of negotiations of capital into baby and then back into capital conforms entirely to Brown's Freudian reading of the fantasy of transformation of bodily excrement into capital increment by way of the metamorphosis of feces into baby and subsequently into "magical," self-engendering money.

Alger's tales sometimes manifest a modicum of self-awareness on the author's part with regard to his role of purveyor of a "magical thinking" that effectively links infantile fantasies of self-fathering with some of the fundamental formations of capitalist culture. In his recent study of forms of popular narrative in nineteenth-century America, Michael Denning has likened the function of Alger's street-boy heroes — "dangerous" figures drawn from contemporary popular, nongenteel fiction (story papers, dime novels) who enact what Denning (correctly) reads as unequivocally genteel moralistic fables — to the use of "a ventriloquist's dummy to recapture and reorganize working class culture."²⁵

I would supplement Denning's characterization of Alger as a ventriloquist across class lines (as well as, I would add, across lines of prohibited sexuality between man and boy) with a brief analysis of Alger's representation of himself in the figure of Professor Henderson, a magician/ventriloquist who figures as a patron/employer of the boy hero of *Bound to Rise*. Henderson first deceives the boy Harry Walton, who has come to work as his assistant, by throwing his voice into a trunk, from which emerges a child's voice pathetically pleading, "Oh, let me out! Don't keep me locked up in here!" Harry is said merely to "smile" when he realizes Henderson has tricked him with ventriloquism (102).

Shortly thereafter, Henderson repeats the trick in the boy's presence, this time at the expense of an elderly woman character; Henderson and Harry have a good laugh at her chagrin. The trick is more elaborate the second time: Henderson throws his voice into the boy's body and increases their mirth by making Harry seem to lie to the woman to the effect that the professor does indeed have someone locked away in the trunk; this time Henderson specifies (ventriloqually) that the child is female — in fact, his little daughter. The climax of the trick comes when the professor throws open the trunk and shows the woman that there is no one there (114-15).

The reader may share some of the woman character's discomfort over the "little girl in the trunk" trick that at a critical point in the episode turns into the "vanishing daughter" trick. Not much imagination is required to produce the biographical speculation that the little girl locked in the trunk, crying to be released, is a figure from

Alger's psychological past who survived in encrypted and rejected form in his unconscious and whose ultimate fate was to be pressed into service as comic relief in texts like *Bound to Rise*.

Even more thoroughly than the ambiguously feminine Tattered Tom, this fantasmatic "little girl" vanishes almost without a trace from the magical network of male interests through which she is passed in this text — leaving the reader to suspect, at this and other points in the Alger corpus, that the "dangerous" figures in his writing are not really at any point the ragged street boys whose labile qualities it celebrates but the little girls it almost totally excludes — along with the femininity they embody, a "threatening" quality insofar as it might permanently disrupt the smooth unfolding in the America of the time of the exclusively male homosocial institutions of corporate capitalism.

* * *

It was in the decade or so after Alger's death in 1899 that Lewis Hine began to produce his extraordinary photographs of the new, turn-of-the-century generation of urban street boys at their work of peddling, shining shoes, selling newspapers, and delivering parcels. What is striking about Hine's photographs is their self-conscious refusal to "gentle" their underclass subjects in the way that Alger and his philanthropist colleagues had done: Hine's boy subjects are not represented as picturesque ragamuffins or charming but dangerous "animals" or "savages," some of whom will inevitably make their way to affluence and respectability.

Rather, his images of these boys reveal their sufferings as real, lasting deformations rather than as transient experiential way stations on the road to untroubled security and success: the child subjects of Hine's photographs characteristically look weary, depressed, and even bitter.

In association with the Progressivist reform organization the National Child Labor Committee (NCLC), Hine wrote and lectured extensively on the need for legislation prohibiting the exploitation of poor children as laborers by either their parents or their employers: his photographs, he insisted, were his incontrovertible documentary evidence that children forced to support themselves by full-time employment at low-paying labor were generally destroyed physically and morally in the process.

Hine supplemented his photographic record of street-boy life with his own antisentimental testimony about their plight: for example, a propos of his 1909 photograph of a Hartford, Connecticut, newsboy named Tony Casale, Hine records that the boy had recently shown his boss the marks on his arm where his father had bitten him "for not selling more papers"; Hine also mentions that the boy said he disliked being the object of verbal abuse from the drunken men with whom he constantly



Hartford newsboy Tony Casale, age 11, in 1909.

Photo by Lewis W. Hine, produced in association with the National Child Labor Committee. A gallery of 60 of Hine's historic photos of "newsies" and other young factory, mine and farm workers, titled "*Child Labor in America 1908-1912: Photographs by Lewis W. Hine*," can be viewed at www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/

came in contact on the city streets.²⁶

Hine and the NCLC encountered strong popular resistance to their movement; politicians and other members of their audiences vociferously denied that conditions for street-child laborers were as grim and brutalizing as Hine represented them as being. Hine's street boys, his opponents often argued, were Horatio Alger heroes, toiling their way up from paupery to comfortable, respectable lives.

It was during these years, between the turn of the century and the beginning of World War I, at the height of the Progressive Era, that Alger's books, republished in cheap reprints that suppressed substantial amounts of the books' didactic moralizing, sold in the millions of copies.²⁷

During his lifetime, Alger had had only one genuine bestseller, the early *Ragged Dick*; only posthumously did he achieve true mass popularity. It was also during the early years of the twentieth century that the term "a Horatio Alger story" became fixed in the language to mean a tale of a man's "rise" from boyhood poverty to a position of great wealth and power. The myth that Alger's are male-capitalist Cinderella tales has had an astonishing success of its own. How can one account for the ubiquity of this inaccurate characterization of the content of Alger's stories? With the benefit of hindsight, we can see that one thing that was being "saved" in Alger's writing was a notion of "virtuous poverty rewarded" that was already archaic when his first street-boy series appeared in the decade after the Civil War.

The Alger mania of readers in the first fifteen years of
(Continued on Page 14)

The Gentle Boy from the Dangerous Classes

(Continued from Page 13)

this century might be said to have served as a reinoculation of American readers with the myth of “virtuous poverty rewarded,” an article of faith that was being vociferously combatted from Progressivist, socialist, and organized-labor quarters during those years.

I would attribute some of the popularity of Alger’s stories with boy readers during and after his lifetime to their propensity for combining a not inaccurate representation of the conditions, requirements, and mild rewards to be expected on the extensive lower reaches of the corporate workplace with a version of boy life — idyllic, domestic, self-perpetuating, untroubled by direct intervention from parents or other adult figures of authority or by the “threat” (to male supremacy) of female enfranchisement — that may strike us as highly unrealistic at first glance but that is (again) a not inaccurate version of some of corporate culture’s favorite modes of self-presentation (i.e., as fraternal, financially rewarding, benevolently hierarchical, open to individual talent or “merit”).

I would attribute the extraordinary tenacity of the “rags-to-riches” misreading of Alger to corporate/capitalist culture’s need for a serviceable mythology of “success” like Alger’s — but one which entirely represses (as Alger’s does not) the determinate relations perceptible in his stories between the achievement and maintenance of white-collar “lifestyles” and particular, exclusive modes of relationship between males. I first began to read Alger’s writing out of an interest in thinking about ways in which his pederasty might have determined it, but I have come to think that the far more interesting way his work manifests male homosexuality is not as indirect autobiographical data for a single figure (i.e., Alger) but as an encapsulation of corporate/capitalist America’s long-cherished myth, its male homoerotic foundations fiercely repressed, that the white males who control wealth and power have their eye out for that exceptional, “deserving,” “attractive” underclass youth who defies his statistical fate to become (with the benefit of limited paternalistic “interest”) yet another “gentle boy from the dangerous classes.”

*Note on illustrations: The illustration on Page 8 from the NASW edition of Charles Loring Brace’s **The Dangerous Classes of New York, and Twenty Years Among Them**, along with Lewis W. Hine’s photo on Page 13 and the illustrations from Alger’s **Herbert Carter’s Legacy and Paul the Peddler**, were selected by the editor to accompany this article’s appearance in *Newsboy*.*

NOTES

I wish to thank Jane Tompkins and Larzer Ziff for thoughtful readings of an earlier draft of this essay, and Jonathan Goldberg and Michael Warner for helpful advice on subsequent versions of it. I also wish to thank Michael Rogin for making valuable editorial suggestions.

¹⁹ Nina Baym briefly but perspicaciously classifies Alger as a domestic writer in *Woman’s Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and About Women in America, 1820-1870* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1978), 261.

²⁰ For an informative account of Beecher’s theory of domesticity, see Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity* (New Haven, 1973), 158ff.

²¹ See Mary Ryan, “Varieties of Social Retreat: Domesticity, Privacy, and the Self-Made Man,” in *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Farnib in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge, 1981), 146-55, for Ryan’s discussion of the compatibility and indeed the congruence of the cult of the “self-made man” with the cult of (feminine) domesticity.

²² Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1981), employs the term *fantasm* to denote “the traces and symptoms of a fundamental family situation which is at one and the same time a fantasy master narrative” that “is an unstable and contradictory structure, whose persistent actantial functions and events . . . demand repetition, permutation, and the ceaseless generation of various structural ‘resolutions’” (180). If, as Jameson suggests, a residue of fantasmatic thinking about “a fundamental family situation” is characteristic of all bourgeois narratives, then it becomes possible to perceive many more narratives as being fundamentally “domestic” — or antidomestic — in their emphases than most of us are probably used to doing.

²³ Michael Pollak, “Male Homosexuality; or, Happiness in the Ghetto,” in Philippe Aries and Andre Bejin, eds., *Western Sexuality: Practice and Precept in Past and Present Times*, trans. Anthony Foster (Oxford, 1985), 44.

²⁴ Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (Middletown, Conn., 1959), 279.

²⁵ Michael Denning, “Cheap Stories: Notes on Popular Fiction and Working-Class Culture in Nineteenth-Century America,” *History Workshop* 22 (Autumn 1986): 6.

²⁶ Quoted in the catalog entry for Lewis Hine’s photograph entitled *Bologna, Hartford, Connecticut, 1909*, in Julie R. Myers, et al., *Of Time and Place: American Figurative Art from the Corcoran Gallery* (Washington, D.C., 1981), 92.

²⁷ Gary Scharnhorst with Jack Bales, *The Lost Life of Horatio Alger, Jr.* (Bloomington, Ind., 1985), 149-56, provides an illuminating account of the “editorial reinvention” of Alger’s work (often by silent abridgement) in the years after his death.

Editor's notebook

(Continued from Page 4)

than we paid in Omaha, making 2007 truly a bargain. The Lees Inn management is also very friendly and they promise we'll have a fine time during our weekend. Lees Inn, incidentally, is a small Indiana-based hotel chain with other locations in Lafayette, Bloomington and elsewhere. Their Web site is www.leesinn.com, where you can make your reservation, but I feel the "personal touch" is preferable by calling the Shelbyville hotel's local number at (312) 392-2299. They are fully aware about the Horatio Alger Society convention and our block of rooms held for the May 17-20 weekend at \$58 per night.

Please mention the Society when you call; major credit cards are accepted for reservations, and you will not be charged until you arrive and use your room. As with most hotels, you can cancel up to 6 p.m. on the scheduled day of arrival to avoid any charges.

You'll remember I mentioned last issue that the city council of Marlborough, Mass., was dealing with a local uproar because the name of its 11-year tradition, the "Horatio Alger Street Fair" was under attack because of Alger's resignation from his Unitarian ministry in Brewster, on Cape Cod, in March 1866, because of his alleged sexual involvement with two boys. This is not news, of course, the so-called "Brewster affair" having been studied by Alger researchers for several decades.

However, in the age of Google, Wikipedia and other readily available Internet resources, stories about a person's past, even a prominent author who has been dead for 107 years, are readily available to all. So, the "political correctness" advocates on the Marlborough City Council (the fair is sanctioned by the mayor and organized by the Marlborough Chamber of Commerce), dropped the other shoe in early December when the name of its event was changed to the "Heritage Festival," beginning with next fall's event.

"It sounds like there's going to be a lot less controversy with a name like that," Marlborough City Council President Arthur Vigeant told the *Boston Herald* for its Dec. 6 editions. The article was headlined "Marlboro fair gets new tag, ditches Alger."

Although the controversy came up in mid-September, the name of this year's fair on Oct. 1 went unchanged because promotional materials had been printed and street displays created, but now Horatio Alger, one of America's most notable authors for young people, is *persona non grata* in his hometown area because a few social and political activists spoke up. For shame.

Is it real, or Memorex? We should be thankful we collect books, because fakes and forgeries of collectible books is a rarity on eBay auctions because of the very

MEMBERSHIP

New member

Chuck Griffiths (PF-1097)
542 Harbor Road
Ocean View, DE 19970
(302) 537-2722

Change of address

Ronald A. Murch (PF-970)
101 Prospect Ave.

Apt. 1
Lewiston, ME 04240
(207) 784-5288
E-mail: ramurch@midmaine.com

David K. Vaughan (PF-831)
7485 Silver Lake Drive
Waynesville, OH 45068
(513) 897-0952
E-mail: dkvaughan62@earthlink.net

New e-mail address

Michael Morley (PF-934)
E-mail: mmorley@carsonvalleybooks.com

Important reminder: Please send all address changes—including new e-mail addresses and phone numbers—to Horatio Alger Society, P.O. Box 70361, Richmond, VA 23255.

nature of old books. The labor involved in faking a copy of an Alger book, even *Timothy Crump's Ward*, would cost more in effort than it's worth. An Alger expert could detect the fake in about 10 seconds. Even the old trick of adding or removing advertising pages won't escape the eyes of an expert. Of course, letters, autographs and other paper ephemera are more likely to be faked.

Late last month, eBay announced major initiatives to help stem the flow of fake and counterfeit materials.

How is this being done? First, all categories of items are studied, with the high-risk items at the top of the list. The most prominent examples are collectible pottery and glassware. A flood of "off-shore" reproductions is

(Continued on Page 16)

Editor's notebook

(Continued from Page 15)

being sold on eBay, complete with reproductions of the "marks" the real makers placed on their pieces, including collectible glassware, figurine and pottery pieces from the early decades of the 20th century. These fakes are being sold as the real thing.

Now, eBay is in the process of notifying sellers specializing in "suspect categories" of items that they will be scrutinized. Here are what eBay describes as its "four safeguards:"

1. Sellers who list items that appear on eBay's list of items particularly susceptible to counterfeiting (a so-called "anti-counterfeiting list") must become PayPal verified. However, those sellers are not required to offer PayPal as a payment option in their listings.

2. eBay will conduct manual "seller reviews" for sellers who frequently list items on eBay's anti-counterfeiting list. eBay will not authenticate items, but it will conduct reviews (methods not specified) to determine whether sellers are on the up-and-up, and whether they'll be permitted to continue selling the items.

3. One-day and three-day auctions will be banned for items high on the anti-counterfeiting list to give potential buyers more time to research and check out the items' authenticity.

4. eBay will restrict cross-border trade on items in the anti-counterfeiting list (the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States can buy and ship items, but China and Hong Kong are excluded). Those two locations have been the source of many buyer complaints of alleged counterfeit items sold.

Todd Lutwak, eBay's senior director of seller development, said these steps "were not a holiday initiative."

Lutwak noted when a seller lists more than a certain number of items on the anti-counterfeiting list, an automatic "trigger" will go up, in effect a red flag requiring a manual review of that seller. "If you've sold these items in the past, your account may have already been reviewed," Lutwak said. "But if sellers alter what they are selling, they may be subject to another review."

The auction site does not inform sellers whether their accounts are under review or have been reviewed. Lutwak urged sellers to be proactive and communicate significant changes in selling patterns so as not to spark the triggers that may lead eBay to take over the account.

As I mentioned, those of us buying and selling old books through eBay probably don't have much to worry about. But thankfully, eBay continues to take fraud very seriously. So, if you see a piece of Depression Glass or a Hummel figurine offered at a ridiculously low opening bid with no reserve, check it out!

A holiday treat ... Alger style

What would "Ragged Dick" Hunter eat? Oyster stew, of course

By Janice Morley (PF-957)

All of us who read the stories of our heroes of the Bowery are familiar with how often the "wayward boys" (that is, before they learned the value of spending their days earning an honest living and evenings at study) treated their friends to an oyster stew after an evening at Tony Pastor's, Niblo's Garden or Barnum's. How many of us have actually tried oyster stew from a period recipe?

Recently, I was going through my mother's hope chest, and I ran across a book titled *Housekeeping for Two — A Practical Guide to Beginners*, by Alice L. James (copyright 1911, by G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York; by the way, this copy is an ex-lib).

With winter and the holiday season upon us, you might want to introduce your family and friends to an "authentic" cold-weather, Alger-inspired dish. I haven't tested the recipe, and I present it below, using the same text I found in the book. Please be warned that you will likely have to make adjustments to suit your taste.

Happy holidays from the Morleys!

Oyster Stew

Fifty stewing oysters

One quart very rich and fresh milk

One-half cup butter

One teaspoonful of flour

One-half teaspoonful of onion juice

Pinch of cayenne pepper

Salt, to taste

Put the strained oyster liquor into a saucepan, and the milk into another saucepan, and heat both. Skim the oyster liquor as it boils. Add the butter rolled in the flour, and boil for a minute or so; then add the oysters and cook until their edges curl, which may take two minutes. Add the scalding milk and the onion juice; season with pepper and salt.

Oyster stew should be served as soon as the milk is added; if allowed to stand for long or to simmer, the milk will curdle.

Little crackers, or dry buttered toast, may be passed.