



THE HORATIO ALGER SOCIETY

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

NEWSBOY



Horatio Alger, Jr.

1832 - 1899

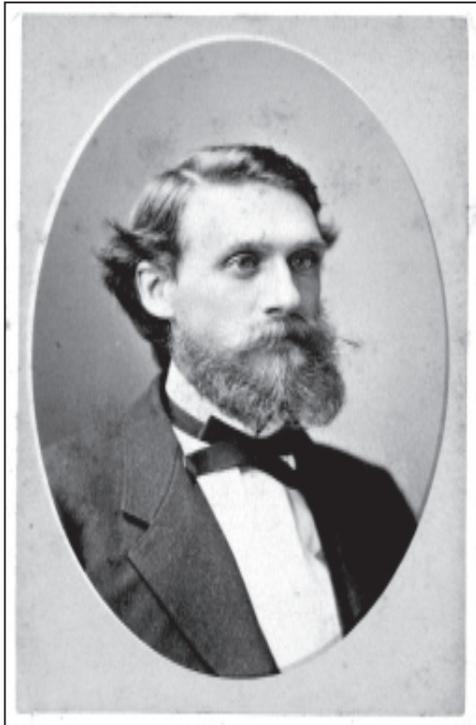
A magazine devoted to the study of Horatio Alger, Jr., his life, works, and influence on the culture of America.

VOLUME XLVIII

JUJY-AUGUST 2010

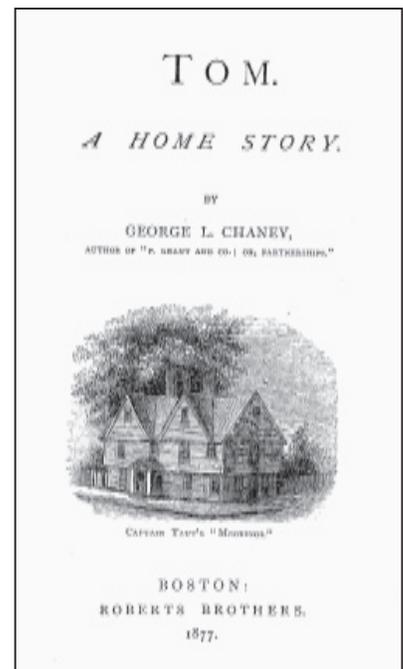
NUMBER 4

George Leonard Chaney



... on Horatio Alger, Jr.,
Oliver Optic and
Capt. Mayne Reid:
A Rediscovered
Nineteenth Century
Perspective

-- See Page 3



*A century
of Tom Swift!*

-- See Page 11

President's column

I hope everyone is enjoying summertime, the long days filled with sunshine, the cool evening breeze, and the smell of food sizzling on a grill. I am spending more time outside this summer since I have taken up cycling again. I love the challenge of man and machine against the road, the wind, and the uphill climb. There is nothing like the feeling of the wind whipping around your face, your legs burning with maximum effort striving to maintain speed while climbing, and the sing-song of your tires on the hot pavement. Until, that is, your rear tire explodes leaving you stranded far from home without a mobile phone because you did not want to worry about losing it. You realize as you walk over a mile to the nearest home that riding, even at maximum output, is much easier and far more fun than walking along a country road pushing a bicycle on hot pavement without even a breeze to cool you.

Channing is now going to preschool 5 days a week and he is loving it. He was somewhat hesitant to leave Mommy and Daddy at first, but now he willingly leaves the vehicle and walks inside the school with the teacher. He already looks like a little man with his backpack slung over his shoulders. Sofia starts preschool in a few days and is looking forward to it as she is extremely jealous that Channing was able to start before her. Time flies and little newborn babies grow into young children ready to step out into new experiences before their parents are ready for it.

I was made aware late last week that Ruth Miller (PF-894), Paul Miller's wife and longtime H.A.S. member, has passed away. I was not honored to know her or Paul, but I do own a few books previously owned by Paul, who died in 2002. We will have a tribute to Ruth in the next issue of *Newsboy*.

Next year we celebrate the 50-year anniversary of our Horatio Alger Society. I wonder if Forrest Campbell and Ken Butler expected their "Newsboy Club" to endure for 50 years? We hope to celebrate the 50th H.A.S. anniversary with all of you next year in Canton, Ohio. Bob Huber will be our gracious host and is already working hard to ensure another great convention. The dates of April 28 to May 1, 2011, have just been announced, and there will be additional information in upcoming issues of *Newsboy*.

Along with Horatio Alger, Jr., I collect many other

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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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Newsboy, the official newsletter of the Horatio Alger Society, is published bi-monthly (six issues per year). Membership fee for any 12-month period is \$25 (\$20 for seniors), with single issues of *Newsboy* \$4.00. Please make remittance payable to the Horatio Alger Society.

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

Newsboy is indexed in the Modern Language Association's International Bibliography. You are invited to visit the Horatio Alger Society's official Internet site at www.thehoratioalgersociety.org

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

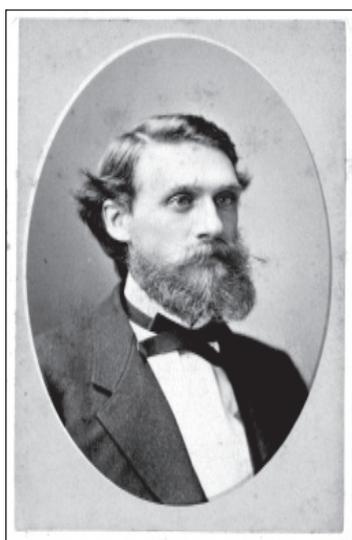
Convention dates set for April 28-May 1, 2011

Host Bob Huber (PF-841) has just announced that the 2011 Horatio Alger Society convention will be held in Canton, Ohio, beginning Thursday, April 28, and running through Sunday, May 1st. This is the weekend before Mothers' Day. The format will be similar to our previous meetings. The convention will be at the Holiday Inn in Canton, at 4520 Everhard Road, just 1-2 blocks off Interstate 77 and 10-15 minutes south of the Akron-Canton Airport (CAK). There is free shuttle service to and from

the airport and the Holiday Inn.

The nightly room rate will be \$95 plus tax, and the rental for the meeting rooms is quite reasonable. Most of the meal planning is done. There is a restaurant and bar in the hotel (no complimentary breakfast, but if you don't like the menu, there's a Bob Evans across the street, along with other nearby restaurants).

Additional information will be available in upcoming issues of *Newsboy*.



George Leonard Chaney (1836-1922)

George Leonard Chaney on Horatio Alger, Jr., Oliver Optic and Captain Mayne Reid: A Rediscovered Nineteenth Century

By Arthur P. Young (PF-941)

Nineteenth-century assessments of Horatio Alger, Jr. as writer are mainly derived from hundreds of book reviews, and a few personal reminiscences and diaries, which provide commentary on his more than 100 works of juvenile literature. And yet most of these reviews and commentaries are brief, only occasionally analytical, and almost never place Alger's work within the larger context of moral value, audience reception, and comparative standing within the popular literature genre. The lack of substantive personal correspondence relating to Alger held in library repositories and the directed destruction of his personal papers at the time of his death in 1899 further limit the availability of contemporary assessments.

The emergence of digitized full-text Internet archives such as Project Gutenberg and Google® Books make it possible to identify heretofore unnoted pre-1920 titles that might illuminate contemporary perspectives on Horatio Alger, Jr. Such a title was recently discovered in the multi-million volume Google Books database: George

Leonard Chaney, *Every-Day Life and Every-Day Morals* (Boston, MA: Roberts Brothers, 1885). Chaney possessed a special blend of attributes which made him particularly well qualified to examine Alger's literary output. He was a fellow clergyman who delivered "The Right Hand of Fellowship" remarks at Alger's 1864 ministerial installation in Brewster, Massachusetts. Chaney wrote a book about the intersection of morals and many segments of society, especially literature; and, like Alger, he authored boys' series books for young adults.¹

George Leonard Chaney was born in Salem, Massachusetts, on December 24, 1836. He entered Harvard College in 1855 and graduated four years later. Chaney then attended the Meadville Theological Seminary, in Illinois, and upon graduation in 1862, became the minister of the Hollis Street Unitarian Church in Boston, Massachusetts. During the Civil War he ministered to the soldiers at camp hospitals of the United States Sanitary Commission. He resigned as minister of the

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Editor's notebook

Most of us looking for a particular title on the Internet (either **eBay** or **abebooks**) have encountered a somewhat recent phenomenon: print-on-demand versions of various books, coming in widely varying binding and typesetting quality. The ongoing growth of the vast Google® Books digital database, among other sources, has opened the door for desktop publishers to grab public-domain titles and do with them what they wish, many of them produced in generic-looking soft covers.

Of course, there are publishers out there who know what they're doing. Jim Towey (PF-975) of West Granby, Connecticut, has been producing important reprints of scarce juvenile titles for years, not print-on-demand, but in small-run, hard-cover editions with colorful cover appliques and dust jackets. Notable recent books include the scarce Howard Garis titles *The White Crystals* and *The Island Boys*. One of Jim's latest projects involves the 15-volume Dave Fearless Series as produced in paperback by the Garden City Publishing Co. in 1926-27. These Stratemeyer Syndicate books (excluding the first three titles, originally "single" books in hard-cover, marketed as the "Deep Sea Series") titles 4 through 15 were ghost-written by Leslie McFarlane and Howard Garis. We'll discuss Towey's project in a moment.

But the most dazzling, true print-on-demand books I've seen recently are the facsimiles of the famous 1932 Tom Swift "Keds books," the first two titles in the famous series republished by Lancaster, Lord & Co. as promotional giveaways for purchasers of Keds athletic

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MEMBERSHIP

New member

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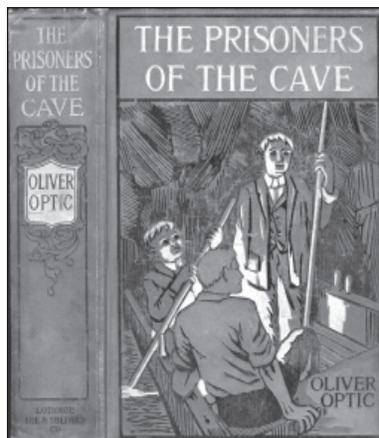
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David is retired and owns two Alger titles. He joined the Society through our official website,

President's column

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authors contemporary with Alger, including William T. Adams, otherwise known as Oliver Optic. Most of his books, with a few exceptions, are rather well known, available, and exist as series of 6 books. However, there is a group of non-series, stand-alone stories written under the Oliver Optic pen-name that are not well-known and are very hard to find. These titles were originally published as serials in **The Golden Argosy**, **The Argosy** and **Golden Days for Boys and Girls**. It appears that



these stories were published between 1882 and 1890. There is much to discuss about these books, as they were not printed in book form until 1909 in Street & Smith's **New Medal Library** and subsequently in 1910 by Lothrop, Lee and Shepard in deluxe hardback bindings.

While the hardback editions published by LL&S are all in a similar format, it is not apparent and they are not identified as being part of a publisher's series. I have been collecting these since I started collecting Oliver Optic and have quite a few with some variant formats, but not all. Some of the titles are *Always in Luck*, *Among the Missing*, *The Cruise of the Dandy*, *Every Inch a Boy*, *His Own Helper*, *Honest Kit Dunstable*, *Louis Chiswick's Mission*, *Lyon Hart's Heroism*, *The Prisoners of the Cave*, and *The Professor's Son*. I have included a sample image (above). I will be writing a detailed article regarding these stories and their printing history in a near future **Newsboy**, but felt they were interesting enough to mention in this column. If you are an Optic collector, I would be very interested in knowing what titles you have in your collection along with images of their covers and spines.

I wish each of you much fun in the sun as the changing of the seasons is soon to arrive.

Your Partic'lar Friend,

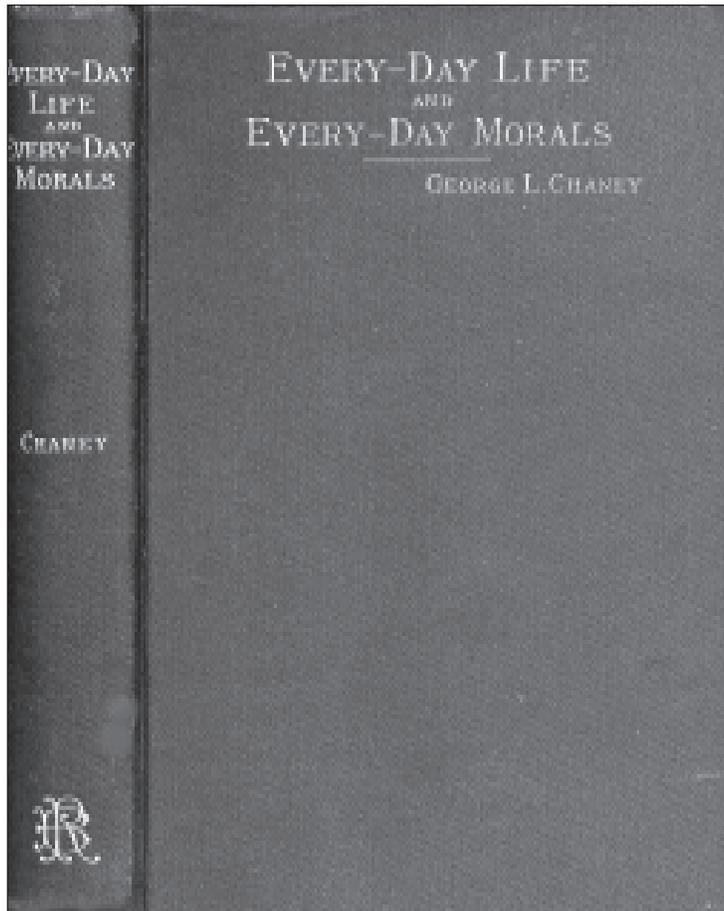
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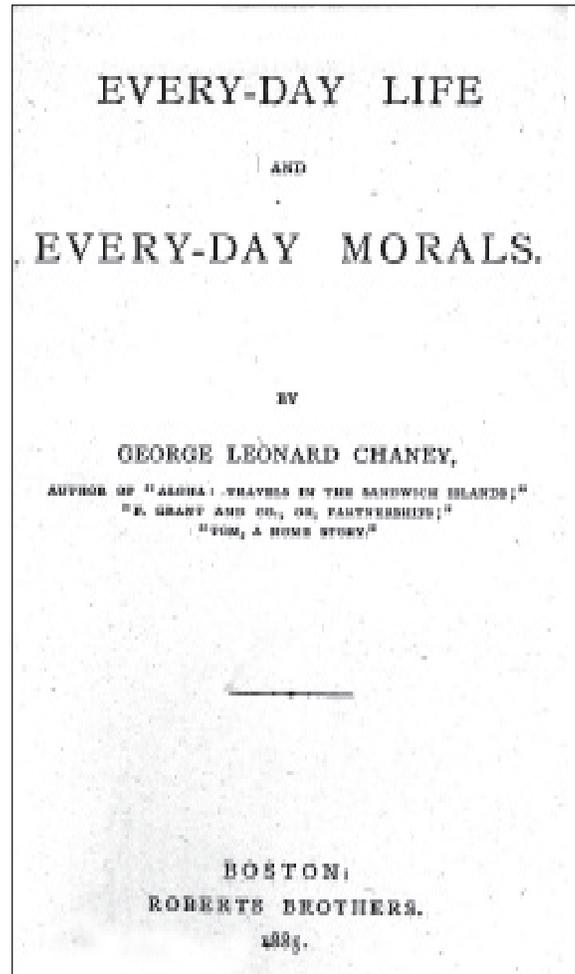
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George Leonard Chaney's *Every-Day Life and Every-Day Morals* (Roberts Brothers, 1885).



George Leonard Chaney

(Continued from Page 3)

Hollis Street Church in 1877 and became pastor of the First Parish Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In 1881 he moved to Atlanta, Georgia, and founded the Unitarian Church of our Father. Together with Edward Everett Hale and James Freeman Clarke, he formed the Southern Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches. In 1882 he helped establish the **Southern Unitarian**, a monthly religious paper. During his stay in Atlanta he aided the Hampton Institute and schools for blacks in Richmond, Virginia, and in Charleston, South Carolina. Between 1893 and 1900 he served on the boards of Tuskegee Normal Institute and Atlanta University. The remainder of his long life was spent in Salem, Massachusetts. He died on April 10, 1922.²

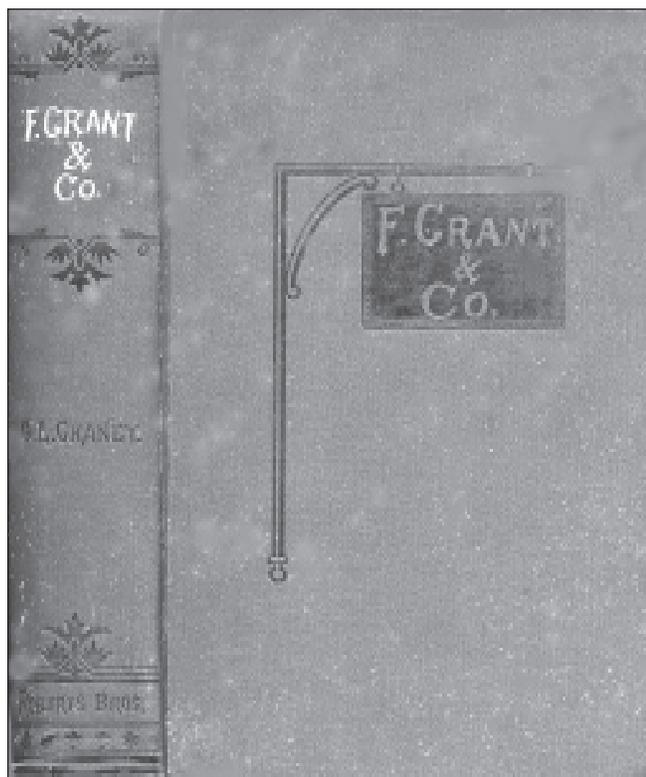
Chaney's two forays into young adult literature were unusual in several respects. First, he bucked the current fashion of pure adventure stories without moral overtones; and second, they were better written

than most of his contemporaries. Unhurried character development can be seen throughout the narratives. His first book, *F. Grant & Co.*, was published by Roberts Brothers and appeared in 1875. The theme was a business partnership which struggled to succeed with the challenges of competition, jealousy, and deception. **The Unitarian Review** and **Religious Magazine** embraced the book:

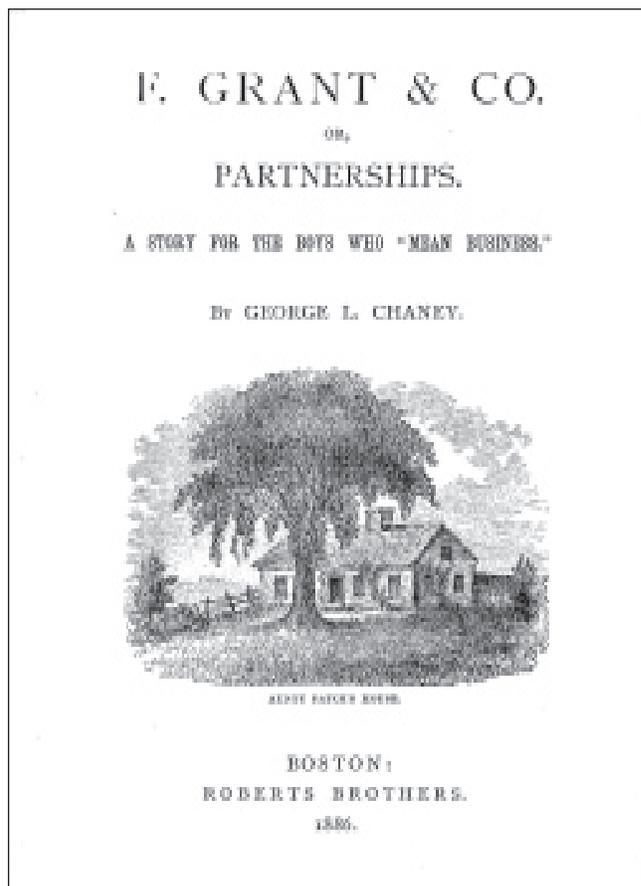
His special aim here is to illustrate the perils and temptations that beset boys (or men) in partnership enterprises. A larger purpose is to commend truth, purity, and reverence, and show the worth of manliness. We suspect a deeper intent still, which is benevolent, and so 'moral' in the author — namely, to please the boys. That he has succeeded in this, is as certain as that the healthy and genial tone of the book will help to make goodness attractive, and meanness hateful to his readers.³

Several years later, he wrote a second volume which was intended to show another path to success in business,

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Chaney's first book, *F. Grant & Co. or, Partnerships*, was published by Roberts Brothers of Boston in 1875. This edition appeared in 1886.



George Leonard Chaney

(Continued from Page 5)

namely a focus on cooperation and brotherhood. *Tom. A Home Story*. was published in 1877 to a similarly positive reception:

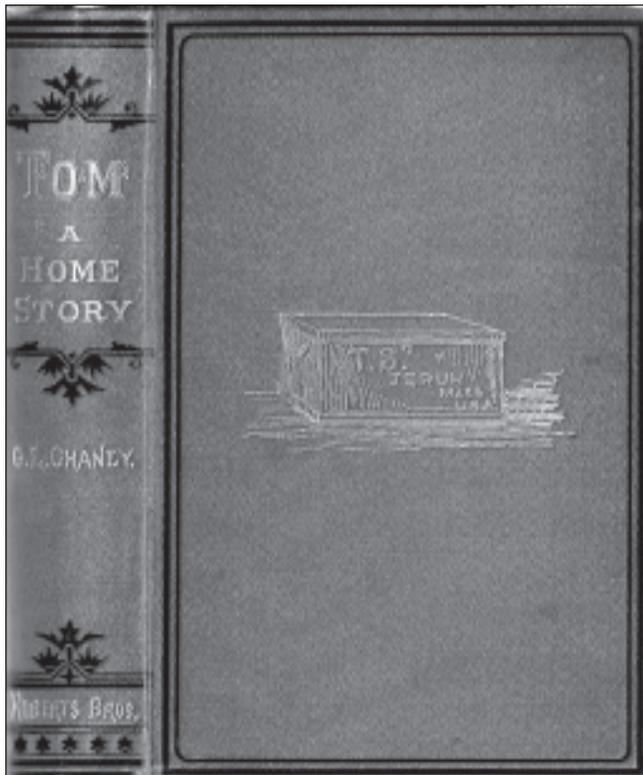
Tom... is the story of a real home and a very real Tom. Reading it awakens the question of whether it is the more enchanting to be a boy, or a boy's mother; and it is hard to believe people who assert that there are drawbacks to both situations. The book is bright, hearty and stirring, full of manly teaching which does not involve a particle of 'preachment;' and it cannot fail to be interesting to every boy and every girl who is lucky enough to get hold of it.⁴

Chaney's authorship of several volumes for young adults lends credibility to his remarks about the genre and to his insights about Alger's place in the constellation of juvenile authors.

Chaney begins his essay on juvenile literature with a definition of literature in its broadest sense. For Chaney,

literature... "applies only to knowledge attractively put... the book must be "sweet in the mouth." Such writers as Tyndall, Huxley, and Proctor, the best contemporary lecturers, convey..." the charm and poetry of their style as well as the value and significance of their scientific truths."⁵ And because the literary element in reading enhances the learning experience, Chaney asserts, it is especially important that children's literature be imaginatively constituted. Along with the home, Chaney sees the school and the library as natural allies in providing attractive literature to juvenile readers. He believes that "the library will quicken the school, and the school will discipline the library. Instead of flying to the library from the school as a refuge and consolation for its dull task-work, the youth will go there to feast on what the school has given him the taste for. Eager to know more of what the school and the home have only had time to teach them a little, he runs to the library to gratify his curiosity."⁶

Turning to specific juvenile authors, Chaney draws upon his firsthand knowledge of William T. Adams, who wrote under the famous pseudonym, "Oliver Optic." Chaney served with Adams as a member of the Boston school board and offers this recollection:



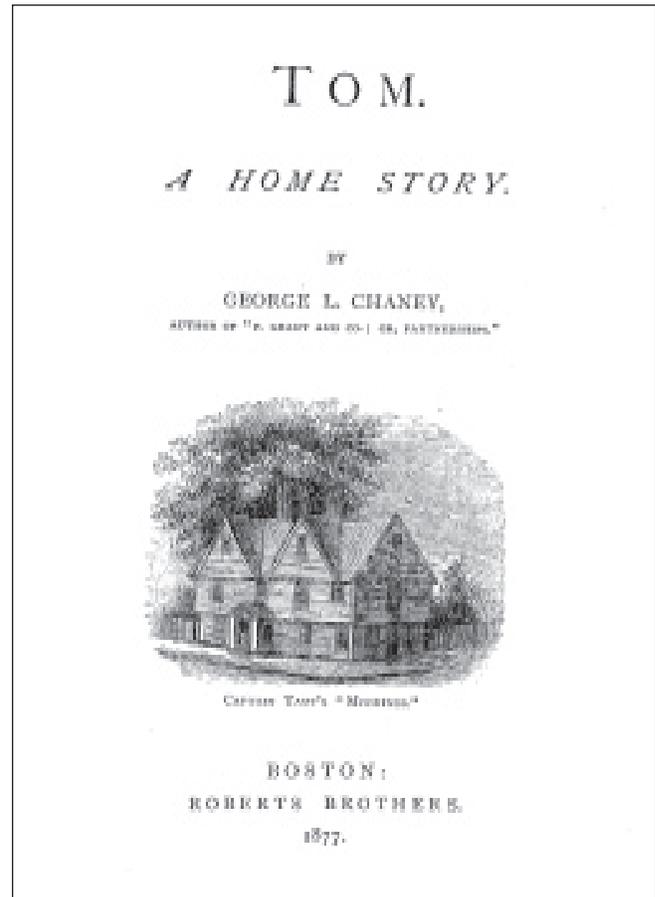
Tom. A Home Story, Chaney's second young adult book (1877) was intended show another path to success in business, in this instance focusing on themes of cooperation and brotherhood.

As I recall the genial, quiet little author, his beaming face and bright black eyes, his modest, unoffending manners and address, I can with difficulty realize that he wrote these tremendous stories... I remember his coming to my desk one evening in the school committee meeting and giving me his experience in story-writing for boys. He began, he said, by writing quiet, stories for children; but the necessities of voluminous authorship, and the discovery of the children's endless capacity for motion, mystery, and adventure had run away with him.⁷

Oliver Optic is a perennial favorite of young readers, Chaney notes, because his characters are always on the move and frequently on vacation. These fast-paced stories confront various mysteries and villainy, with honesty and innocence always triumphant.

Chaney's examination of the works of Horatio Alger, Jr. is also grounded in a personal relationship with the author. Chaney delivered the 1864 ordination sermon at the installation of Alger as the new minister in Brewster, Massachusetts. He first recalls the physical Alger:

A little, fair, innocent-looking man, with tender eyes and the complexion of a girl, as far removed, one would



say, from knowledge or interest in the street boys of New York as the young moon. His personality then, like his slender frame, was only faintly outlined. I suspected him of poetry, and predicted for him a long and saintly country pastorate like that of George Herbert — a prediction which showed that I was no prophet. It has all been the very reverse of my anticipation. He left the ministry before three years have passed and took up juvenile literature.⁸

Chaney concedes that some Alger stories have their faults, including a vulgarizing quality. His stories are not read for their faults, but rather for their merits. And the overriding merit is the perception of reality on the part of his youthful readers.

Chaney expands upon this important quality of Alger's books:

These stories of the street Arabs of New York, their fortunes and misfortunes, their exposures, sufferings, and trials, their struggle for life, and the survival and ultimate success of the fittest and most enterprising of them, have something in them which appeals to the sense

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George Leonard Chaney

(Continued from Page 7)

of reality in boys. The characters may not be exemplary. They are often far from that; but they seem real. If you hit them know that they would hit back. They have far more nature in them than the better-behaved boys of better-approved books. If they are rough, pert, rowdy, and daredevil, that is what such boys really are. The boy-reader knows this, and he likes the truth of the picture whether he likes the picture or not.⁹

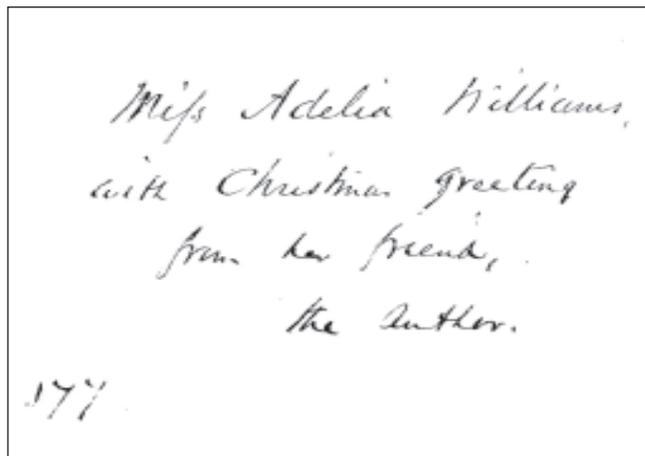
Alger's focus on the street urchins is clearly designed to elicit sympathy from the reader, especially those readers from the lower classes who could project their proximity to many of Alger's characters. For Chaney, the realistic nature of the Alger tales is the cement which binds the narrative to young readers. He connects this realism to the essential nature of young readers:

... the characters generally have a likeness to life in them and that alone is no mean merit, especially in a boy's eyes. He can forgive anything more easily than unreality or insincerity; and half the books written for children with the moral or religious purpose are as unreal as ghosts. Boys are nature's detectives of unreality. If I knew myself to be a humbug, I would beware of boys.¹⁰

Chaney offers a nuanced interpretation of the Alger narrative without either a theological overlay or an elitist prescription.

Two other authors are singled out for special mention. Capt. Mayne Reid, author of many rugged outdoor books featuring multiple adventures and perilous escapes, was again favored by young readers for his relentless realism. In contrast to earlier works such as *Boy Voyager's*, Reid's later books, such as *Oceola* and *The Flag of Distress* may be criticized as "crude, mawkish, love and blood and thunder stories."¹¹ Reid's downhill progression is a common fate for writers who publish for many years. Only a few great writers are able to sustain a high level of quality throughout their careers. Oliver Optic joins the company of Reid and others as an author who outlived the captivating, wholesome quality of his earlier contributions.

In time, Chaney believes, young readers transition from the "...strain of these boyish tragedies... to a better and simpler class of books."¹² Chaney clearly defends the robust boy adventures as age appropriate and as a stepping stone to a more refined corpus of literature. Among his many recommended authors for higher-



An inscription by George Leonard Chaney, signed as "The Author," in a copy of *Tom. A Home Story*.

level reading may be noted Louisa May Alcott, Mrs. Diaz, Ms. Elizabeth Clark, Mrs. Molesworth, Juliana Ewing, Thomas Hughes, George McDonald, Bayard Taylor, Francis Parkman, Charles Dickens and Edward Eggleston. The major challenge is how to get these and similar authors read by young people. Parents and teachers must play a leading role, but not one of overbearing advice. The young reader must be led to books which are age appropriate.

The role of societal institutions is critical to nurturing good reading and to ensuring the availability of a broad range of reading materials. For Chaney,

The school and the church are the twin pillars of republic. But the school must do something more than reading, even as the church must teach something more than doctrines. But one must lead us to the best reading, and the other to the best living. Failing this, both fail, and the republic with them.¹³

And it is the nation's free libraries, with their diversity of materials, which must facilitate the journey from the merely enticing to the more sophisticated. Although book banning is not directly addressed, Chaney indicates that no legal solution will interdict the rush of cheaper literature, especially dime novels. He concludes with a special plea to upgrade public libraries for the "colored boys and girls" of Georgia.¹⁴

This rediscovered commentary on three prominent 19th-century juvenile authors compels our attention for multiple reasons. Chaney is writing from first-hand acquaintance with two of the three authors which are discussed. His analysis of their works is refracted through the lens of objective literary criteria and the more subtle context of the sociology of reading. Chaney,

with considerable insight, comprehends the nexus between the text, the reader, the public, the facilitating institutions, and the blending of all of these facets into a progressive culture.

There is a judicious temperament at work here. Chaney renders his judgment without favor and defends the availability of juvenile literature to a broad audience despite its formulaic and sometimes bombastic qualities. Chaney resists the temptation to join the juvenile book banners that flourished among many educators and librarians in the 1880s and 1890s. He espoused a child-centered approach to reading that would first ignite the imagination as a stepping stone to more advanced literary fare. It is doubtful, and regrettable, that Chaney's perceptive remarks reached a broad audience given their publication in a book largely devoted to many nonliterary subjects. He must now be recognized as a new voice in our understanding of nineteenth-century juvenile literature.

NOTES

1. George Leonard Chaney, *Every-Day Life and Every-Day Morals*. Boston, MA: Roberts Brothers, 1885): 35.

2. George Leonard Chaney papers, finding aid, Emory University. <<http://marbl.library.emory.edu/findingaids>>

3. George L. Chaney, *F. Grant & Co., or, Partnerships: A Story for the Boys who 'Mean Business.'* Boston, MA: Roberts Brothers, 1886; Review of *F. Grant & Co.*, **Unitarian Review and Religious Magazine** 3 (January 1875): 111.

4. George L. Chaney, *Tom. A Home Story*. Boston, MA: Roberts Brothers, 1877; Review of *Tom. A Home Story*, **Literary World** 8 (December 1877): 123.

5. Chaney, *Every-Day Life and Every-Day Morals*, 24.

6. Chaney, *Every-Day Life and Every-Day Morals*, 29-30.

7. Chaney, *Every-Day Life and Every-Day Morals*, 34.

8. Chaney, *Every-Day Life and Every-Day Morals*, 35.

9. Chaney, *Every-Day Life and Every-Day Morals*, 36-37.

10. Chaney, *Every-Day Life and Every-Day Morals*, 38.

11. Chaney, *Every-Day Life and Every-Day Morals*, 40-41.

12. Chaney, *Every-Day Life and Every-Day Morals*, 44.

13. Chaney, *Every-Day Life and Every-Day Morals*, 47.

14. Chaney, *Every-Day Life and Every-Day Morals*, 50.

Editor's notebook

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shoes (also called "sneakers"). James and Kim Keeline have meticulously produced these books in conjunction with their recent Tom Swift centennial convention in San Diego, with the actual production by the reputable **lulu.com** print-on-demand online publisher.

These are not mere photocopies of the originals. The text type, margins and line spacing have been carefully re-set to closely match the font and type size of the 1932 editions. Thus, the books' number of pages are close to the originals. The covers, in exactly the same cream-yellow color with red and blue "quadrant" illustrations, are on high-gloss index stock, using the "perfect-bound" binding process. The internal paper is high quality rather than the cheap, fragile pulp of the originals. The cover size of 6x9 inches is only slightly smaller than the 1932 originals. By the way, these stories contain the full texts from the 1910 Grosset & Dunlap hard-cover editions.

And the best news is that these Tom Swift Keds reprints are only \$10 each! Instead of just the first two titles, the Keelines decided to produce the entire 1910 breeder set of five titles. In an appendix, James has written an essay about the origin and influence of the Tom Swift character, which over the past century has resulted in

105 books in five different series by Grosset & Dunlap and various Simon & Schuster imprints. Best of all, he has included the names of the ghost-writers for nearly all the books, obtained from documents held in the Stratemeyer Records Collection at New York Public Library and other sources.

I have added this set to my collection with great pride. Anyone interested in Tom Swift should act now. Illustrations and ordering information can be found on Page 15.

Dave Fearless returns: Jim Towey has a handful of sets remaining of titles numbers 10 and 15, *Dave Fearless Under the Ocean* and *Dave Fearless on the Lost Brig*, both written by Leslie McFarlane of Hardy Boys fame using the house name "Roy Rockwood." Right now, titles 11 through 14 are at the bindery, along with another rare title *The Lone Ranger Rides*, those to be available later this month. This batch of Dave Fearless books will complete the 10 through 15 run written by McFarlane. If these sell well, Towey will consider reprinting titles 4 through 9, which were written by Garis. Towey currently has Nos. 10 and 15 listed on eBay under "Buy it Now" at \$40 each postpaid (use keywords "Dave Fearless").

For more information, write or call Jim Towey at 249 Hartland Road, Granby, CT 06090; (860) 653-7447.

You can also visit Jim's Ken Holt home page at members.cox.net/kenholt.

More memories of 2010 convention



Brad Chase discusses his major ongoing project to identify and catalog the many Hurst Alger reprint formats. Photo by Bob Sipes



Convention host Art Young discusses "George Leonard Chaney on Horatio Alger, Jr.: A Rediscovered Nineteenth Century Perspective." Photo by Bill Gowen



Awards banquet keynote speaker Nicholas Basbanes offers his insights on the "gentle madness" of book collecting. Photo by Bill Gowen



H.A.S. president Bob Sipes and vice president Barry Schoenborn examine Art Young's Alger first-edition collection during the Youngs' open house in Durham, N.H. Photo by Bill Gowen

Tom Swift: Inventor of the century

Centennial celebration of Stratemeyer Syndicate legend held in San Diego

By James D. Keeline (PF-898)
and Kimberlee Keeline

The Stratemeyer Syndicate produced many popular series and quite a few more which are forgotten outside the shelves and want lists of serious series collectors. For a time, one of the most popular of the Syndicate's products was the Tom Swift series.

Beginning with five volumes in July 1910, thirty-eight volumes were issued by 1935. These were followed



by two Whitman Better Little Books in 1939 and 1941. By 1934, George T. Dunlap reported

in his memoir, *The Fleeting Years*, that Grosset & Dunlap had sold about 6.5 million copies of volumes in the Tom Swift series. Stratemeyer's own Rover

Boys series was second at about 5 million copies.

Though the aircraft and electric inventions of Tom Swift seemed dated in the atomic age, the idea of a scientist-inventor was revived in 1954 with a second generation, Tom Swift Jr. Between 1954 and 1971 there were thirty-three volumes issued. By 1961 the sales of Tom Swift Jr. were so brisk as to be double that of the original series. Sales leveled off after that point, but it is reasonable to estimate a total of 15 million copies of Tom Swift Jr. being sold in the U.S., plus international sales.

Three additional Tom Swift series have been issued, respectively, in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s for a total of five series and 105 volumes in the past century. With a track record like that, it was a natural idea to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Tom Swift with a collector convention.

Plans began in 2008 and since we were hosting it and planned to show some large items which are not easily moved, we selected San Diego for the location of this event. After announcing our idea to the Tom Swift Yahoo group, a suggestion was made to host a 2009 event in Hammondsport, New York, a town that is thought to be the model for Shopton in articles and books written



Tom Swift 100 convention participants at the entrance of San Diego's historic Hotel del Coronado. From left: James Keeline, Neil Morrison, Joe Dixon, Greg Weir, Bob Cook, David Baumann, Jon Cooper, Chris Vardeman and Bob Vardeman.

Photo by Kim Keeline

by Jack Dizer (PF-511) and others.

The July 2009 Hammondsport/Bath convention had about a dozen people participating, including Jack Dizer, Bill Gowen, Neil and Meg Morrison, George Dombi, and ourselves, among others. We treated this as something of a kickoff for the 2010 event in San Diego.

The San Diego event was held on the weekend of July 16-18, 2010. On Friday, we had a museum and library tour. The main convention was on Saturday and Sunday at the Sheraton Mission Valley.

Ten people participated in the tour. We first met in the hotel lobby and got acquainted. As is usual with this kind of event, many of the people were meeting face to face for the first time. However, with a group of people wearing Tom Swift shirts from the TS100 Cafe Press online store, we were pretty easy to spot, and people who were not attending the tour stopped by to introduce themselves and say "hello." Tour participants included Bob Cook, David Baumann, Greg Weir, Jon Cooper, Neil Morrison, Joe Dixon, Bob Vardeman and his son Chris.

On Thursday, July 15, before the convention Bob and Chris Vardeman boarded the Zeppelin NT Eureka for a flight over San Diego. We invited them to fly around San Diego around the timing of our event. They flew on Wednesday through Friday and we saw them a couple times during our Friday tour.

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Tom Swift centennial

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When all were gathered, we boarded the 15-passenger van to travel to our first destination, Balboa Park. This is the large museum complex in San Diego, east of the downtown area. It boasts about 24 museums and cultural institutions. Several of the buildings from the park are either preserved or restored from structures created for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition. In that year both San Diego and San Francisco had Panama-related expositions. Edward Strate-meyer attended both of them in the summer of 1915; so, in a way, we were following in his footsteps. We passed by the Spreckles Organ Pavilion, which was built in 1915 and remains one of the largest outdoor pipe organs. Of course, many of Balboa Park's buildings were created later, especially for the 1935 exposition.

The two museums we visited were the San Diego Automotive Museum and the San Diego Air & Space Museum. We had boxed lunches together under two of the large aircraft on display in front of the museum. One of them is a Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird high-altitude spy plane, the fleet now retired from service.

Our next stop was the Hotel del Coronado, an iconic red-roofed Victorian hotel where Stratemeyer stayed during his 1915 visit. It also has connections to Thomas Edison, who is reputed to have installed and lit the first outdoor Christmas tree with his electric lights. L. Frank Baum wrote some of his Oz stories from a cottage near the hotel. We explored the lobby and twice saw Eureka flying overhead.

Our last destination for the tour was the UC San Diego library with its futuristic tree-like design. In a lower floor of the library was the Tom Swift Centennial exhibit, which we helped to set up. We provided books, artwork and artifacts for the two-month-long display. Many of

the Tom Swift Sr. books came from one of Bob Cook's spare sets, while we provided dust jacket scans from our collection to add a touch of color.

The library employee, Scott Paulson (who helped with the exhibit) also helped arrange a radio-drama style live performance of a public domain Tom Swift, Jr. story, *Tom Swift and the Visitor From Planet X* (1961) using voice talent from San Diego Write Out Loud and his own superb expertise as a sound effects man. He had an amazing array of mechanical and electronic sound gizmos to bring the story to life. About 50 people were in the

audience for the 40-minute radio show, including our tour group and a few others participating in the convention. This radio show and the exhibit were free and open to the public.

After returning to the convention hotel, some of us drove to a nearby mall where we ate at Ruby's Diner. This location is themed with decor from the 1939 New York World's Fair.

After dinner we unloaded the rental truck with the help

of several convention participants in order to set up the exhibit room. In addition to the books and convention merchandise, we also unloaded the wicker cockpit from the "Aeroship" that was built for the 1960s Tom Swift film project by Twentieth Century-Fox. The film was not produced but the studio did build two full-scale airships, and we purchased the surviving parts a couple years ago. The cockpit, steering wheels, blueprints, and other imagery formed a central part of the sale/display room at the Sheraton.

The next morning was the beginning of the convention presentations. After some welcome and introductions, I gave the first presentation called "Stratemeyer Syndicate 101; Or, Where Did All of Those Books Come From?" This was intended to orient the audience to the methods used by the Stratemeyer Syndicate to make the Tom Swift books and some of the other series they produced between 1905 and 1985.

The next presentation was "The Geology of Tom



Neil Morrison stands before the Tom Swift Aeroship cockpit display. This 7x7 foot, two-seat wicker cockpit was built for the 1960s unsuccessful attempt to make a Tom Swift film.

Photo by Kim Keeline



Steve Clugston, dressed as Glenn Curtiss, gave a role presentation as the aviation pioneer, who many believe is a real-life model for Tom Swift. Clugston is joined here by James Keeline.

Photo by

Swift" by Joe Dixon, a geologist from Arizona. This delved into the geology topics as seen in the first Tom Swift series, including Earthquake Island in *Tom Swift and his Wireless Message*, the Caves of Ice in Alaska, hunting for platinum as described in *Tom Swift and his Air Glider*, seeking oil in *Tom Swift and his Great Oil Gusher*, etc.

After a lunch break we continued with USC scientist Charlie Campbell, talking about science in the Tom Swift Jr. series and how it compared with the real-world science of the time the books were written.

We continued with a very interesting panel discussion about the rich and high-quality Tom Swift fan fiction. Most of the people producing their own Tom Swift, Jr.-era stories were present and another was represented by a video, which we played in the middle of the presentation period. We got to learn why they felt compelled to write these stories, how they go about doing it, and how their version of the Tom Swift Jr. universe differs from the original books.

We were also lucky to get a presentation by Bob Vardeman, an author who is unique in having written stories for two different Tom Swift series. He wrote Tom Swift #9, *The Gateway to Doom* (1983) in the third series published under Simon & Schuster's Wanderer imprint, as well as two books in the 1990s Simon & Schuster Archway series — #7, *The Microbots* and #12, *Mutant Beach*. He went into detail about his relations with editors, his process, etc.

The last presentation on the program for Saturday before the dinner was by San Diego wordsmith Richard Lederer, whose topic was the "Tom Swifties" jokes. This phenomenon exploded on the scene in 1963

when a book of them was placed on the market. The authors suggested that the structure of these puns was to be found in the original Tom Swift books. Actually, the particular structure of the sentence in the "Tom Swifties" is not as common in the books as the punsters indicate.

We had a brief break before the convention dinner at the hotel. Next, we gathered in the presentation room for another live radio drama performance. This time it was based on one of the original 1910 books, *Tom Swift and His Airship*. Again, Scott Paulson and performers from Write Out Loud did a spectacular job bringing this story to life in an abbreviated 40-minute form. Both used scripts created by Paulson from the original public-domain stories. At both events, the audience got to help provide some of the sound effects in the form of bubble wrap for gun shots, coconut shells for horses, and cellophane for a fire. This was great fun and definitely one of the highlights of the convention.

Throughout Saturday, a representative from the Canadian Broadcast Corporation, Dave Redel, was there recording participants' quotes as to why they liked Tom Swift enough to travel across the country for an event like this. He is putting together an hour-long documentary about the Stratemeyer Syndicate for September broadcast on the radio and online. The first air date will be the evening of Wednesday, Sept. 22 and again on the afternoon of Monday, Sept. 27.

On Sunday, we began with a video produced by two astronomers, Peter and Robert Jedicke, who not only discovered an asteroid but applied to have it named "TomSwift." Their 15-minute video provided background on the discovery process and made associations between Tom Swift, Jr. books such as #28, *Tom Swift and the Captive Planetoid* (1966) and what is now known about asteroids.

George Dombi then presented Jack Dizer's talk on "How Tom Swift Invented Everything." Jack presented this himself at the 2009 HammondSport meeting in the Glenn Curtiss Museum's theater.

David Baumann made a very interesting presentation on his memories of what it was like to buy the series books we collect from the 1950s when they were new and available in retail establishments of the time. This wasn't always a bookstore or even a book department of a department store. One example he gave was a liquor store. It's easy to imagine what Stratemeyer would have thought about that.

After lunch, we had a presentation by Steve Clugston, a former curator of the March Air Force Base museum, who dressed as and portrayed himself as Glenn Curtiss, the aviation pioneer. Curtiss was not only a model for

(Continued on Page 14)



Many hands make light (and safe) work as the Aero-ship cockpit is loaded into the rental truck on Sunday. Thanks to all of those who helped, including those in this photo: George Lusk, Henri Achee, Neil Morrison, Greg Weir and Bob Cook (James Keeline's back to camera).

Photo by Kim Keeline

Tom Swift centennial

(Continued from Page 13)

Tom Swift but also participated in early air meets in France, New York, and Los Angeles. He founded an aviation school in San Diego and experimented with sea planes and activities which would lead to the Navy's development of aircraft carriers. This presentation took the form of an old style press conference with the audience asking "Mr. Curtiss" questions in their roles as newspaper reporters.

After this, Jon Cooper talked about the unanswered questions in the Tom Swift, Jr. series. What did Tom Junior do before he invented the Flying Lab? How did he meet Bud? What happened to some of those discoveries mentioned in some books? And what of his long-suffering girlfriend, Phyllis Newton? In some ways, this was a sounding board for topics he covers in his own fan fiction stories, which are both sequels and prequels to the 33-volume Tom Swift Jr. series.

Jim Lawrence, Jr., son of the ghostwriter for about three-quarters of the Tom Swift, Jr. volumes, wanted to attend the convention but instead sent in videos with answers to about 28 questions provided by Scott Dickerson. In the time available, Scott posed the questions and we played Jim's answers.

We commissioned the construction of a number of desktop models of the "Aeroship" designed and built for

the 1960s Tom Swift film. We have had a delay in being able to offer them, but expect to be able to provide them soon to those who are on the waiting list.

Our final presentation was by San Diego writer Jeff Berkwitz about the TV space operas of the 1950s, which might have indicated the pattern of a Tom Swift, Jr. television show had one been produced in that period as was being worked upon. He showed an episode of "Tom Corbett, Space Cadet" after many slides illustrating the different shows and people involved. He even talked about a visit to a Michigan aviation museum that has acquired one of the truck trailer-sized rockets, which traveled around the country to promote one of the shows. The museum is restoring this long-neglected artifact. It reminded us of our own future project to preserve and restore the surviving parts of the Tom Swift/Twentieth Century-Fox Aeroships.

By the end of the weekend, we were all tired but a bit reluctant for the event to end. We had up to 50 participants in the convention and at the two radio shows. Additionally, there were about two dozen people, including parents and children, who passed through the sale and exhibit space to get a sense of what Tom Swift is all about.

When we discussed when we might meet again, I suggested that we use the occasion of Jenn Fisher's SleuthCon in Phoenix in March 2012 as a time to organize Tom Swift-related presentations there. While it would have been nice to have a larger attendance, everyone there found it worthwhile and informative.

TS 100 Internet sites of interest

Tom Swift Yahoo group
groups.yahoo.com/group/Tom-Swift

TS100 Cafe Press store
www.CafePress.com/TS100

San Diego Automotive Museum
sdautomuseum.info

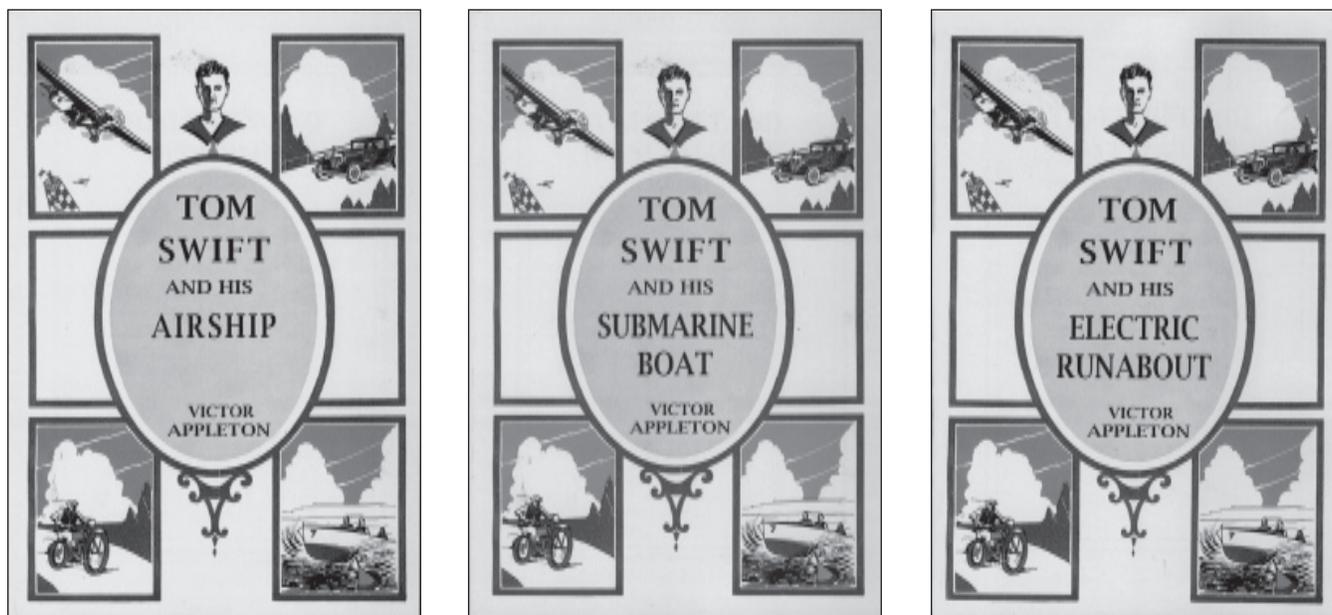
San Diego Air & Space Museum
sandiegoairandspace.org

Hotel del Coronado, San Diego
hoteldel.com

San Diego Write Out Loud ensemble
writeoutloudsd.com

UC San Diego libraries
libraries.ucsd.edu

Jenn Fisher's 2012 SleuthCon in Phoenix
ndsleuths.com/sleuthcon.html



100th Anniversary Tom Swift “Keds books.” Facsimile reproductions of *Tom Swift and His Motor Cycle* and *Tom Swift and His Motor Boat*, published in this format by Lancaster, Lord & Co., in 1932. New titles added (above) are *Tom Swift and his Airship*, *Tom Swift and his Submarine Boat* and *Tom Swift and His Electric Runabout*. Published by 24 Palmer Street Press, San Diego, Calif. \$10 per title, or \$50 for all five books, plus shipping. Order directly from www.lulu.com/spotlight/24PalmerStreet. Additional Tom Swift collectibles from the 2010 San Diego centennial convention are on sale at www.CafePress.com/TS100.

Collect a unique piece of Tom Swift history!

Produced in conjunction with the Tom Swift 100 convention, James and Kim Keeline have a selection of licensed Tom Swift merchandise for sale on Cafe Press (www.CafePress.com/TS100) and from Lulu books (www.lulu.com/spotlight/24PalmerStreet). There are also items on hand (www.TomSwiftEnterprises.com/overstock) which have lower prices than the other sites.



Items include T-shirts, coffee mugs, tote bags and coaster tiles, all with Tom Swift book cover color images. These are offered for a limited time only, through a licensing agreement with Simon & Schuster.

The Lulu print-on-demand books include reprints of the first five Tom Swift volumes from 1910 in a format intended to replicate the now-scarce books given away as promotions with Keds athletic shoes in 1932. Only the first two books were issued in this format, but we decided to publish all five 1910 volumes at \$10 apiece. Each has an essay on the origins of the Tom Swift series and a list of the books and collectibles connected with the books. The book list includes the known ghostwriters identified.

The other book now offered on the Lulu.com site is

the *Tom Swift Guide to Life*, of which we are proud. This book is 50 color pages of anecdotes and life lessons culled from the Tom Swift and Tom Swift, Jr. series. It is available in hardcover and paperback at the www.lulu.com/spotlight/24PalmerStreet website.

The 24 Palmer Street Press imprint that we are using on Lulu is intended to evoke and commemorate the address where Edward Stratemeyer lived with his family from at least 1876 to the end of 1890. There he wrote his amateur texts and his first professional stories, including “Victor Horton’s Idea.” In the near future that story will be available as a book publication with an introduction. It will be the first of a group of Stratemeyer reprints to include stories in several categories:

- Scarce books
- Serials not collected as books
- Short story collections
- Unpublished manuscripts

Stratemeyer and Tom Swift fans are invited to periodically check www.lulu.com/spotlight/24PalmerStreet for these and other updates. Our goal is to build interest in my Stratemeyer biography, which I hope to have published in time for SleuthCon and the Stratemeyer Sesquicentennial in 2012. — James and Kim Keeline

TREASURER'S REPORT

May 2009-April 2010

INCOME

Advertisements.....	\$32.00
Auction proceeds.....	5,400.00
Convention surplus.....	1.20
Membership dues.....	2,990.00
Interest.....	204.27
Society merchandise	8.00
Strive and Succeed fund:	
MissionFish.....	45.41
Strive and Succeed - other ...	<u>1,075.00</u>
Total Strive and Succeed donations.....	<u>1,120.41</u>

TOTAL INCOME\$9,755.88

EXPENSES

Auction consignment payouts.....	\$3,955.20
Convention:	
Advance.....	(500.00)
Award plaques	178.00
Total convention	(\$322.00)
Executive Director's expenses	152.50
Honorarium.....	100.00
Newsboy expenses:	
Printing.....	\$2,529.00
Postage.....	1,162.62
Supplies (envelopes, etc.)	<u>339.66</u>
Total Newsboy expenses	\$4,031.28
Roster (printing and mailing)	\$392.96
Illinois Secretary of State.....	10.00
Strive & Succeed Award (2009)	2,000.00
Web page	<u>328.80</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$10,648.74
NET INCOME	(892.86)

Balance sheet as of April 30, 2010

ASSETS

Current assets (checking/savings)	
Certificate of deposit (CD).....	\$8,872.91
Checking account	6,106.61
S&S Award fund.....	1,323.38
Total checking/savings accounts.....	\$16,302.90
Total current assets	\$16,302.90
TOTAL ASSETS	\$16,302.90

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

Equity:	
Opening balance, equity.....	\$4,763.05
Retained earnings	12,432.71
Net income	(892.86)
TOTAL EQUITY	\$16,302.90
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$16,302.90

Submitted by Christine DeHaan, Treasurer

May 1, 2010

Note: *The annual Treasurer's Report as published in the May-June issue contained an incorrect listing of total expenses. This is the accurate version.*