



# Mark Twain Circular

Newsletter of the Mark Twain Circle of America

Volume 24

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Number 2

## The President's Letter

James S. Leonard  
The Citadel

### Circling

In this momentous Year of Twain—the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death, the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth, the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American publication of his most renowned work, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*—I'm happy to report that the Circle not only is in good financial health, but, more importantly, continues to thrive as an active, vital force in American literary scholarship. For that we owe thanks to the strong leadership of such past officers as Bruce Michelson, the outgoing President (now moving to the job of Chair of the Executive Committee of the Circle), the general enthusiasm of the Circle's membership, and, most pertinently, the unmatched pleasure that time spent studying Mark Twain's life and work inevitably affords.

As Kerry Driscoll's minutes indicate, this year's Mark Twain Circle Business Meeting at ALA included some current and future changes of officers. My thanks to the Circle membership for the opportunity to serve, for the next two years, as President—the thirteenth, if my memory and arithmetic are correct—of this august author society. Linda Morris will serve for those same two years as Vice-President, and Kerry Driscoll will continue to serve as Executive Coordinator until the 2011 ALA conference, at which time she'll be succeeded by Sharon McCoy (who will be Executive-Coordinator-in-training in the meantime). In addition to Bruce, Ann Ryan will continue on the Executive Committee in her ex-officio capacity as Editor of *The Mark Twain Annual*, and John Bird

will begin a term as at-large member of the Executive Committee. Chad Rohman continues as Editor of the *Mark Twain Circular*.

The aforementioned strength and vitality of Twain scholarship was well represented at ALA by the excellent presentations and accompanying discussions that constituted the three (no less!) Circle-sponsored sessions, as well as the first-ever Mark-Twain-versus-whomever scholarly throwdown, in this case titled "The Trouble Begins at 3:30: Cooper v. Twain," and matching the Circle's finest (Kerry Driscoll, Bruce Michelson, and John Bird) against the James Fenimore Cooper Society's best-they-had-to-offer (Wayne Franklin, Matt Sivils, and Signe Wegener). It's true that the Twain forces handled their Cooperite counterparts far more gently than Twain handled Cooper; nonetheless, in my entirely impartial judgment, it was a clear victory for Twain (and humanity, damned though they may be). Who's next? Bring on Jack London! Bring on Henry James! We're ready ...

And on the subject of first-ers, the Circle gathered on Saturday afternoon at ALA for a San Francisco Mark Twain Walk, under the knowledgeable and energetic guidance of Richard Reineccius, our man in San Francisco, who took us to Mark Twain-related sites—including a photo op at the sign designating Mark Twain Place (next to the Transamerica building)—and concluded the tour at the Beatnik-related City Lights Book Store, followed by beer and conversation (no expresso, unfortunately) at the equally Beatnik-informed Vesuvio Café (across Jack Kerouac Alley from City Lights). Thanks to Richard for this excellent service to the Circle.

Commemorating the Year of Twain are the following upcoming events (some of which will have happened by the time you read this issue of the *Circular*): [continued on p. 2→]

- October 15-16, 2010 Twain symposium at Elmira: “en route: Mark Twain’s Travel Books, *A Tramp Abroad* and *Following the Equator*” [chaired by Terry Oggel]
- November 5-7, 2010: two SAMLA panels (Atlanta)
  - Mark Twain Circle session, chaired by Sharon McCoy: “Of its own accord and uninvited’: Mark Twain’s Influence on Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century Literature and Culture”
  - Additional Mark Twain session, chaired by Jules Hojnowski: “Mark Twain’s 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of His Birth: ‘New Beginnings’”
- November 13, 2010 Twain symposium at St. Joseph College (Hartford): “Mark Twain at 175: An American Icon Reconsidered” [chaired by Kerry Driscoll]
- December 9-12, 2010 (San Diego): Quadrennial Conference of the American Humor Studies Association and the Mark Twain Circle of America [chaired by Janice McIntire-Strasburg and John Bird]
- January 6-9, 2011: two MLA panels (Los Angeles):
  - “Mark Twain and the Political Climate” [chaired by James Leonard]
  - “Mark Twain and the Problematic Self” [chaired by Laura Skandera Trombley]

As for the first year of the next Twain century (i.e., 2011), see the “Call for Papers” (in this *Circular* issue) for the Circle’s sessions at the American Literature Association Conference in Boston, May 26-29, 2011. □

## Dates to Circle

**November 5-7, 2010.** The South Atlantic Modern Language Association (SAMLA) Conference, Atlanta, GA.

**November 13, 2010.** St. Joseph College Twain Symposium.

**December 9-10, 2010.** The American Humor Studies Association and The Mark Twain Circle of America quadrennial conference, San Diego, CA.

**January 6-9, 2011.** The Mark Twain Circle at the Modern Language Association (MLA) conference, Los Angeles, CA.

**May 26-29, 2011.** The Mark Twain Circle at the American Literature Association (ALA) conference, Boston, MA.

**ABOUT THE CIRCLE.** The Mark Twain Circle of America was formed at an organizational meeting held at the 1986 Modern Language Association convention in New York. Although many members are academic specialists, the Circle also includes many non-academic Twain enthusiasts.

**ABOUT THE CIRCULAR.** The *Mark Twain Circular* is the newsletter of the Mark Twain Circle of America. It is published twice per year (April and November) and is mailed, by the editor, to all members of the Mark Twain Circle. The *Circular* prints news of Mark Twain events and scholarship, directories of members, and current bibliography. Subscribers are distributed among 44 states and 14 foreign countries.

**ABOUT THE ANNUAL.** The Mark Twain Circle also publishes an annual volume titled *The Mark Twain Annual*, edited by Ann Ryan (Le Moyne College), featuring criticism and pedagogy related to Mark Twain and his works.

## Great Mark Twain Circle Moments at the 2010 ALA: Twain vs. Cooper



The Cooper forces fire the first shot, as Kerry Driscoll and Bruce Michelson plot their strategy.



The Cooperites fall back in the face of John Bird’s response.



The Twain forces celebrate their victory.

Photos and captions courtesy of Jim Leonard

**Mark Twain Circle of America  
Annual Business Meeting  
May 28, 2010  
San Francisco Hyatt Regency**

1. President Bruce Michelson called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m., and made brief opening remarks about the many exciting activities unfolding during this landmark “Year of Twain.”
2. Executive Coordinator Kerry Driscoll then gave the Treasurer’s Report as follows:
  - The Circle currently has 175 national members and 33 international members.
  - 2010 membership renewals are still coming in; to date, checks have been received from approximately 80 individuals.
  - The Circle’s treasury contains \$11,951.10. We paid \$4900.00 to Wiley-Blackwell for the printing and mailing costs of the 2009 *Mark Twain Annual*; in return, we received a payment from Wiley-Blackwell in the amount of \$5050.00. \$150.00 was spent on the printing and postage costs for mailing out the 2010 subscription renewals.
  - In April, an electronic postcard was filed with the IRS, as required under the terms of our status as a 501(c)3 tax-exempt non-profit organization. This status, granted on a three-year basis, will expire at the end of December 2010. She will file the necessary paperwork for renewal.
  - The Circle continues to receive small royalties for the *Mark Twain Circular* from Ebsco and Gale

(though more from the latter than the former).

3. *Mark Twain Annual* editor Ann Ryan spoke briefly about her plans for the upcoming centenary issue, which will appear this fall. It will feature new voices in Twain scholarship and short reflective pieces from established scholars addressing either a key passage from a work of classic Twain scholarship or the broader question “Why I study Mark Twain.” Ann also extended her gratitude to Wiley-Blackwell for all of their hard work in producing the *Annual*. Lastly, she noted that the *Annual* is not listed in the Modern Language Association Bibliography of scholarly journals; Emma Hennessey, the Wiley-Blackwell representative attending the meeting, stated that she would correct that.
4. Chad Rohman, the editor of the *Mark Twain Circular*, then spoke briefly about the new design format of the newsletter, and his plans to expand the bibliography section of recent publications. He encouraged members to send materials for the bibliography to him, and also indicated that photographs of Twain events would be most welcome. Chad also announced that back copies of the *Circular* will be available electronically on the Mark Twain Circle of America homepage soon.
5. President-Elect Jim Leonard added to Chad’s remarks, explaining that the *Circular* is available online in three locations: the Mark Twain Circle website, as well as the Ebsco and Gale databases. The Circle has a non-exclusive contract with these publishers, and receives a small amount of revenue from them for the *Circular*.
6. Speaking on behalf of the Nominating Committee, Bruce Michelson then proposed that Linda Morris (whom he described as “an independent feisty critic”)→

become the Circle's new Vice President. This was put to a vote, and unanimously approved.

7. Bruce then nominated Sharon McCoy to succeed Kerry Driscoll in the position of Executive Coordinator beginning in May 2011. This proposal was put to a vote, and unanimously approved as well.
8. The meeting then moved on to new business. Bruce announced that he had been contacted by an organization called "The Norman Mailer Center for Writers," which is seeking a senior Twain scholar to visit China—at the Norman Mailer Center's expense—this fall as part of the "American Literature Travel Study Program." A number of other members had received this email as well, including Susan Harris, who expressed interest in making the trip to China. Bruce indicated that he would be speaking by phone with a representative of this Center later in the day, and that he would provide further details via email.
9. The subject of Circle dues was then raised. The dues were last raised (in the amount of \$3.00) in May of 2007; however, it was noted that under our current arrangement with Wiley-Blackwell, the Circle must pay \$25 (in other words, the entirety of the annual dues) per member per year for the *Mark Twain Annual*. Larry Howe made a motion that beginning in January 2011, Circle dues be raised to \$30 per year (\$32 for international members), but that the rate for graduate students remain at \$25. The motion was put to a vote, and unanimously approved.
10. Jan McIntire-Strasburg reminded everyone of the upcoming American Humor Studies conference December 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> at the Bahia Hotel in San Diego. The deadline for proposals is May 31<sup>st</sup>. Twain proposals

should be directed to John Bird at Winthrop University.

11. Jim Leonard announced that the next day (Saturday) at 3 p.m., a walking tour of "Mark Twain's San Francisco," led by local Twain aficionado Richard Reineccius, would leave from the front of the Hyatt Regency. All were invited to attend. The walking tour would end at another San Francisco literary landmark—Vesuvio bar, located at Jack Kerouac Alley, just adjacent to City Lights Books—where the Circle would sponsor its traditional ALA happy hour/reception at beginning at 4:30 p.m.
12. Emma Hennessey, of Wiley-Blackwell, provided a brief update on the marketing of the *Mark Twain Annual*. Wiley-Blackwell is now deemphasizing the "bundling" of the journal in the American Literature Collection, and it is being sold individually—though it can still also be purchased, at an additional discount, with the other journals in the collection. She stated that 2009 was a "good year for the *Annual*," with 1099 downloads of essays. Jim Leonard encouraged everyone to ask their institutions to subscribe to the *Annual* (individual gift subscriptions cost \$133.00, an amount which perhaps could be funded at the departmental level).
13. As the meeting drew to a close, the august mantle of presidential power passed from the shoulders of Bruce Michelson to Jim Leonard. Jim and Kerry thanked Bruce for his many services to the Circle over the past two years, and presented him with framed archival photographs of Sam and Livy, generously provided by Kevin MacDonnell of MacDonnell Rare Books.
14. The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kerry Driscoll



# The American Humor Studies Association and The Mark Twain Circle of America

Invite you to join us for our  
**2010 Quadrennial  
Conference.**

**December 9-12, 2010**

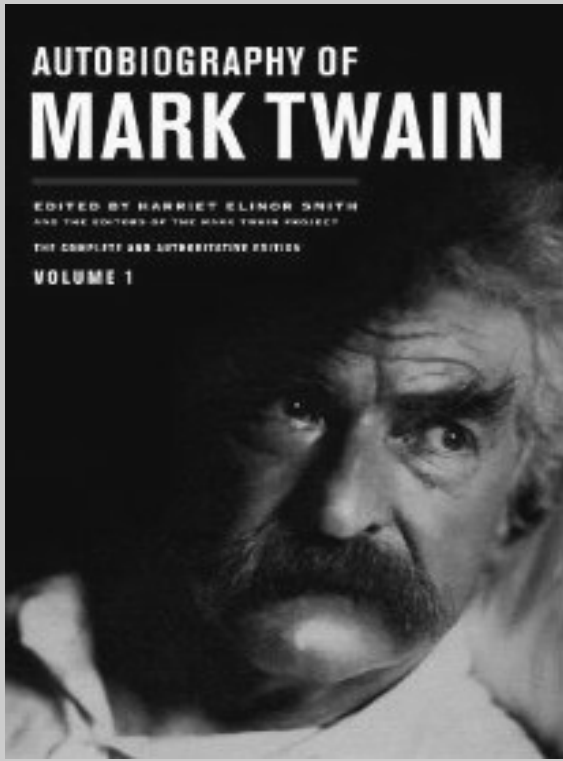
[Panel Chairs: Jan McIntire-  
Strasburg, St. Louis University;  
John Bird, Winthrop University]



**The Bahia Resort Hotel  
San Diego, California**

Forthcoming from the University of  
California Press, fall 2010.  
*Autobiography of Mark Twain, vol. 1.*

Thank You to the  
Former and the  
New Mark Twain  
Circle Officers!



Original Mark Twain image by Tom Kovacs, Professor Emeritus,  
University of Illinois

**Call for Papers  
Mark Twain Circle Sessions  
American Literature  
Association Conference  
Boston, MA  
May 26-29, 2011**

**The Mark Twain Circle of America invites proposals for conference sessions (80 minutes per session) or individual papers (15-20 minutes) for the 2011 ALA conference (Boston; May 26-29).**

**The topics are entirely open, provided that they're Twain-related.**

**Send your proposal to Jim Leonard by January 7, 2011, at the following address: jim.leonard@citadel.edu**

**To:** Prof. Kerry Driscoll  
Executive Coordinator, Mark Twain Circle  
Department of English  
Saint Joseph University  
1678 Asylum Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06117

Please enroll me as a member of the **Mark Twain Circle of America** and subscriber to the *Mark Twain Circular* and *The Mark Twain Annual*. I enclose a check for \$25.00 (\$27.00 for a non-U.S. address) made out to "Mark Twain Circle of America."

\_\_\_\_\_  
(printed name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(city, state, and zip code)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(email address—please write clearly)

## **Mark Twain Walk at the 2010 San Francisco ALA Conference**

Photo courtesy of Jennifer Lieberman, Ph.D. student at Illinois



## Current Mark Twain Bibliography

**James S. Leonard, The Citadel**  
**Chad Rohman, Dominican University**

*Current Mark Twain Bibliography* is a means of giving notice of what is new in Mark Twain scholarship. Where annotations are used, they are in most cases descriptive blurbs provided by publishers (or in some cases, by authors) with value judgments edited out. If you have recently published something that you would like to have included in this list, send it to the current *Circular* editor, **Chad Rohman**, by email (crohman@dom.edu).

### Books

**Fishkin, Shelley Fisher.** *Feminist Engagements: Forays into American Literature and Culture.* Macmillan Press, 2009. Cloth. 279 pages. \$28.00. ISBN: 978-0-23061-594-6.

A Choice Outstanding Academic Title for 2010. This book offers historically-grounded, feminist interventions into American literary history by one of the country's leading scholars in American Studies. Integrating criticism, biography, social history, popular culture, and personal narrative Fishkin explores the poetry, fiction, nonfiction and drama of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century. These charismatic, readable essays range from explorations of feminist humor and *chutzpah*, to meditations on the personal and the political, to examinations of feminists' challenges to cultural paradigms. Fishkin's lively voice engages readers with the American past and leaves a bold stamp on the literary landscape. [Text from publisher's website.]

**Fishkin, Shelley Fisher.** *Mark Twain's Book of Animals.* University of California Press, 2009. Hardcover. 340 pages 2009. \$27.50. ISBN 978-0-52024-855-7.

Longtime admirers of Mark Twain are aware of how integral animals were to his work as a writer, from his first stories through his final years, including many pieces that were left unpublished at his death. This beautiful volume, illustrated with 30 new images by master engraver Barry Moser, gathers writings from the full span of Mark Twain's career and elucidates his special attachment to and regard for animals. What may surprise even longtime readers and fans is that Twain was an early and ardent animal welfare advocate, the most prominent American of his day to take up that cause. Edited and selected by Shelley Fisher Fishkin, who has also supplied an introduction and afterword, *Mark Twain's Book of Animals* includes stories that are familiar along with those that are appearing in print for the first time. [Text from publisher's website.]

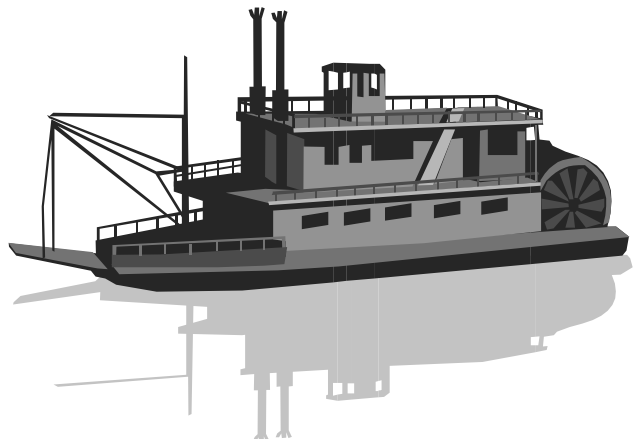
**Fishkin, Shelley Fisher.** *The Oxford Mark Twain* (New in Paperback). Oxford University Press, 2009. Cloth. 14, 176 pages. Full set price, \$250.00. ISBN: 978-0-19973-349-1.

Colorful, irreverent, romantic, skeptical, a master of comic asides, a bittersweet humorist, and an unflinching critic of

human pretensions, Mark Twain speaks to us across time with verve and wisdom. On the occasion of the centennial of his death, Oxford is issuing a paperback set of *The Oxford Mark Twain*. In addition to gathering together most of the writings ever published by Twain in the U.S., each volume is introduced by an eminent writer. Their essays combine critical insights and personal appreciations of Twain as a fellow writer. An interpretive essay by a leading scholar that sets the book in its context concludes each volume. At the heart of each is a facsimile edition of Twain's original which captures its contemporary flavor. Many include original illustrations which suggest the life and times of the books. [Text adapted from publisher's website.]

**Twain, Mark.** *What Is Man? and Other Irreverent Essays.* Ed. S. T. Joshi. Prometheus Books, 2009. Paperback. 230 pages. ISBN 978-1-59102-685-3.

Mark Twain is sometimes envisioned as a kind of 19th-century American offshoot of Voltaire. Like his French counterpart, he expressed a deeply felt indignation at religious hypocrisy and obscurantism, and peppered his satirical writings, especially in his later years, with stinging wit and iconoclastic fervor. This collection assembles writings in which Twain views the multifarious claims of religion—metaphysical, moral, and political—with a skeptical eye. As editor S. T. Joshi points out in the introduction, Twain took aim at religion not just out of irreverent glee but because of serious concerns about central religious tenets that weighed on his mind for much of his life. Though he maintained till his death that he believed in God, he expressed deep skepticism regarding such religious beliefs as special Providence (God's interference in the affairs of individual human beings), the concept of hell, the religious basis of morality, and the divine inspiration of the Bible. The centerpiece of the book is the long philosophical dialogue, *What Is Man?* (1906), which presents a rigidly deterministic view of human behavior, claiming that every action is the product of outside influences. Twain also asserts that altruism does not exist: we help others primarily as a means of making ourselves comfortable. Other writings in the book condemn religious exclusivity, the hypocritical Christian thirst for money, and the disgraceful treatment of animals by a supposedly moral human race. Containing many writings by Twain not generally available except in expensive academic publications, this affordable paperback edition has been annotated to elucidate historical, literary, religious, and other references. Also included is a lengthy introduction providing a historical overview of Twain's shifting attitudes toward religion. [Text drawn from promotional flyer.] □



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The Citadel

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- Kerry Driscoll  
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- Bruce Michelson (Past President)  
University of Illinois
- John Bird  
Winthrop University
- Ann Ryan (Editor, *Mark Twain Annual*)  
Le Moyne College

#### Editor, *Mark Twain Circular*

- Chad Rohman  
Dominican University

The *Mark Twain Circular* is the newsletter of the Mark Twain Circle of America.

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**SERIAL LIBRARIANS:** The *Mark Twain Circular* is entered selectively in the annual bibliographies of the Modern Language Association and the Modern Humanities Research Association, and in the *American Humanities Index*, the *Literary Criticism Register*, *American Literary Scholarship*, and "A Checklist of Scholarship on Southern Literature" (which appears annually in the Spring issue of the *Mississippi Quarterly*).

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Thanks to Jim Leonard (The Citadel) and Mike Fair (Dominican University) for their valuable help on this issue of the *Mark Twain Circular*.