



Mark Twain Circular

Newsletter of the Mark Twain Circle of America

Volume 27

April 2013

Number 1

The President's Column Linda Morris University of California, Davis

As Mark Twain scholars and devotees, we are especially fortunate to have four major historical and/or archival sites associated with Samuel Clemens—in Hannibal, Hartford, Elmira, and Berkeley. I thought it would be interesting to learn what the news is at each of the sites, and because I live within walking distance of the Mark Twain Papers and Project at the Bancroft Library, I started there over lunch with Editors Victor Fischer and Harriet E. Smith, and the Digital Publications Manager, Sharon Goetz.

The biggest news from the Mark Twain Papers (MTP) is that Volume II of the *Autobiography* is currently at the proof reading stage, with an official release date set for October by the University of California Press. (The press is offering a pre-release discount for on-line orders—check out their web site.) At the same time that the hard copy is released, the MTP will post its own digital edition of the *Autobiography*, not to be confused with the e-book version. The obvious advantages of the web version, to be found under the heading Mark Twain Project Online, are that it is free and it allows readers to view the text and the explanatory notes simultaneously on a split screen; it's the only place where one can read the textual commentaries about the history of the specific text. Meanwhile, work on Vol. III is moving along, according to the Editors.

The MTP is also continually updating its online edition of the letters of Sam Clemens as new letters turn up. Remarkably, the MTP has been discovering about 200 “new” letters a year, all of which will eventually be inserted into the online edition. I found it especially interesting that some of the letters we thought were complete as reprinted by Albert Bigelow Paine turn out to be only excerpts and will be updated. Finally, the MTP will be adding a new book to the *Jumping Frogs* publication series, this one edited by Benjamin Griffin, featuring the “Family Sketch” manuscript acquired by the Bancroft Library at a 2010 auction at Sotheby's.

The Mark Twain House and Museum in Hartford (MTH&M) continues to host writers, scholars, educational programs and their ever-popular tours. As readers of the Mark Twain Forum will recall, Cindy Lovell has recently been appointed as the Executive Director of the MTH&M. Their “Trouble Begins at 5:30” is featuring scholars familiar to the Mark Twain community, such as Kent Rasmussen, and Kerry Driscoll will present a college prep enrichment program on reading *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Their writer's series is pleased to be featuring two writers of renown in July, Terry Brooks and Steven King.

The Mark Twain Boyhood House & Museum (MTBH&M) has just announced that it has named Henry Sweets as Executive Director. In addition to their ongoing educational and community programs, the MTBH&M is featuring a presentation by Sweets in April →

[cont. on page 3—see “Morris.”]

Report from the Complicating Twain Elmira Symposium October 19-20, 2012

The annual ALA convention has been a very warm and convivial tradition for the Mark Twain Circle. In 2011, however, when the Twain community came together in Boston, we were dealing with the unexpected passing of Michael Kiskis only three weeks earlier, casting a pall over what is always a happier meeting. Recognizing a need and an opportunity, Ann Ryan and Kerry Driscoll proposed holding a conference in Michael's honor at Elmira in the fall. Of course, planning a conference on such short notice was logistically impossible. But to their credit and to that of Barb Snedecor, the Elmira staff, and Ann Cady (Michael's widow), the initial plan was realized in October 2012 with a weekend symposium titled "Complicating Twain: Biography, Autobiography, and the Personal Scholar: Remembering Michael Kiskis." The event was a heady mixture of heartfelt memory (sometimes irreverent, to be sure) and lively scholarly exchanges.

The festivities began on Friday the 19th with a dinner followed by Laura Skandera Trombley's Keynote Address, "Come Back to the Raft Ag'in, Michael Honey." She promised that this would be the last eulogy she would give on Michael's behalf. Her narrative of their twenty-year friendship and MT Circle adventures certainly fit the occasion of "speaking well."

The Scholarly portion of the program began in earnest on Saturday with three panels: Autobiography, Twain and Others, and Traveling In (and with) Twain—totaling twelve very interesting presentations on topics and texts across the broad spectrum of Twain's remarkably full life. A few of the titles—"The Hour of Lead': Mark Twain and Grief," "Like Real Chums': Twain's Relations with African Americans in Elmira's Domestic Circle," and "Running with Coyotes"—hint at the variety of topics. Many of the presenters were "first-name basis" members of the community, but notably some were warmly received newcomers, of whom I hope we'll see more in the future.

The formal part of the event was completed by a Roundtable discussion on "The Scholarly Legacy of Michael Kiskis," held in the Elmira Chapel. Ann

Ryan, Kerry Driscoll, Bruce Michelson, and Gary Scharnhorst discussed the role that Michael played in shaping, and often challenging, the scholarly industries involved with Mark Twain studies. And they generously invited insights from Ann Cady, and questions and comments from the audience, all of which reinforced our awareness of Michael's serious commitment to the profession and to making scholarly work personal *and* relevant.

The event concluded on Saturday evening at Quarry Farm with cocktails and conversation on the porch and in the parlor of the house, followed by dinner in the barn. Kerry's closing remarks gave everyone present an opportunity to share remembrances of Michael. There was considerable laughter and a few tears (a joke that Michael was fond of about a foul-mouthed parrot and a frozen chicken elicited both). In light of all the years and energy Michael devoted to foster the Twain community, I can't think of a more fitting tribute to his dedication, friendship, humor, and charming idiosyncracies than to bring us all together to celebrate him and Twain, both of whom have encouraged us to think deeply and to laugh heartily. --Larry Howe

Photos from the Elmira 2012 fall Symposium: Complicating Twain

Sharon McCoy
gives her paper
(at right).
[Photo by
Linda Morris]

Participants
at the closing
dinner (below)
[Photo by Jules
Hojnowski]



[cont. from pg. 1: **Morris**]

entitled “Sam and Livy: A Love Story.” Henry wasn’t available for comment when I was gathering information for the *Circular*, but if you visit their web site you’ll see that they continue to offer programs designed to appeal to the many visitors who come each year to see where Sam Clemens grew up.

The Elmira Center for Mark Twain Studies, Elmira College, hosted a conference in October to honor the memory of Michael Kiskis—see the article by Larry Howe on pg. 2 of this newsletter, reporting on the conference. In addition to their ongoing “Trouble Begins at 8:00” series, the big news at Elmira is the upcoming Quadrennial Conference on the State of Mark Twain Studies, to take place in early August. This year, according to Director Barbara Snedecor, approximately eighty papers have been accepted for presentation at the conference, the most ever. If this is any indication of the state of Mark Twain studies, it is obvious that Twain-related scholarship is thriving. □

The poster features a central illustration of Mark Twain standing next to a dog on a checkered floor. To the left and right of the illustration are fragments of text from his letters. A box on the right contains registration information. The bottom of the poster includes the title 'One Man, Many Legacies', a quote from Twain, his signature, the conference dates, and the organizing institution.

Elmira 2013

The Seventh International Conference
on the State of Mark Twain Studies

Registration
Deadline:
Monday,
July 22nd
See page 4.

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four o'clock
eight hours.
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tion I began this letter with.
Yours, dreamily,
MARK TWAIN.

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to bed at
wake forty
in order to

Sam Clemens

Virginia City, Nevada (European Agency) (February 1867) and Memphis (1867) (rarely Mark Twain Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley)

One Man, Many Legacies

“Yours, dreamily,
MARK TWAIN.”

Mark Twain

Observing the Sesquicentennial of the Pen-name

Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies

August 1 - 3, 2013

For information, visit the Elmira College Twain conference website:
[http://elmira.edu/academics/distinctive_programs/
twain_center/conference](http://elmira.edu/academics/distinctive_programs/twain_center/conference)

Mark Twain Dates to Circle:

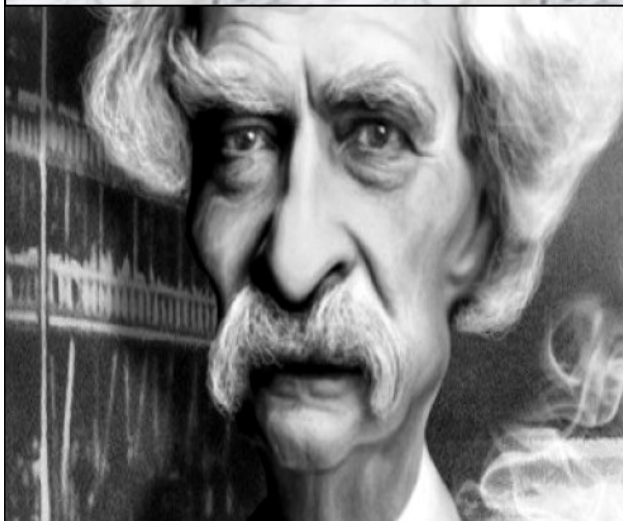
- **Mark Twain Circle @ the 24th Annual American Literature Association Conference (Boston's Westin Copley Place): May 23-26, 2013.**
- **The Seventh International Conference on the State of Mark Twain Studies: "One Man, Many Legacies"—Observing the Sesquicentennial of the Pen-name (Elmira College): August 1-3, 2013.**
- **Mark Twain Circle @ SAMLA (Atlanta): November 8-10, 2013.**
- **Mark Twain Circle @ MLA (Chicago): January 9-12, 2014.**

**Check Out the Newly Created
Mark Twain Circle Website:**

A FINE WORDPRESS.COM SITE

@

<http://marktwaincircle.org/>



**Mark Twain Circle
Panels at ALA
Boston, MA (May 23-26, 2013)
[See Information @ Right →]**

**The Mark Twain Circle
at MLA 2014**

January 9-12, 2014, Chicago, IL

1. **Mark Twain's Style(s)—analysis of Twain's style in fiction or nonfiction.**
2. **Beyond Huck and Pudd'nhead: Mark Twain and Race—analysis of Twain and racial issues in works other than the two most commonly examined texts.**

MTC Organizer: John Bird.

2013 ALA

MTC PANEL INFORMATION

Mark Twain: Iconic Texts Reconsidered
Organized by the Mark Twain Circle of America
Saturday, May 25, 9:30 AM, Session 15C

Chair: Chad Rohman, Dominican University

1. "Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, and Literary Property," Lawrence Howe, Roosevelt University
2. "Hank Morgan: The Capitalist God," Connor McBrearty, University of Texas at San Antonio
3. "Death, Suffering and the Civil War in Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad*," Haein Park, Biola University

Mark Twain and History
Organized by the Mark Twain Circle of America
Saturday, May 25, 12:30 PM, Session 17C

Chair: Lawrence Howe, Roosevelt University

1. "History and Her Stories: Mark Twain, Mary Ann Cord, and Jane Lampton Clemens," Sharon McCoy, University of Georgia
2. "Exposing Hackmen and Demoralizers: Mark Twain's Punishment of San Francisco Beasts in 1864," Jarrod Roark, University of Missouri-Kansas City
3. "Humbug History in *Tom Sawyer's Conspiracy*," Alex Beringer, University of Montevallo

Mark Twain Circle of America Business Meeting, all welcome: Saturday, May 25, 2:00 PM, Session 18N

Mark Twain Circle and Studies in American Humor Society Combined Reception: Saturday, May 25, 5:30 PM, Location to be Announced

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.

If you have published an article, chapter, or book on mark Twain in the last twelve months, please send a notice of your publication to the editor of this newsletter:

Chad Rohman
at
crohman@dom.edu.
Thank you.

**“Complicating Twain”
2012 Elmira Symposium Organizers
on the Steps of Quarry Farm →**

**Kerry Driscoll
Barb Snedecor
Ann Ryan**

[Photo courtesy of Jules Hojnowski]

To:

**Prof. Sharon McCoy
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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 \$30.00 (\$25.00 for graduate students, and \$32.00 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 Circular April 2013

Current Mark Twain Bibliography

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 websites (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, please send it by email to the current editor, Chad Rohman, at crohman@dom.edu.

Books

Garvey, Ellen Gruber. *Writing With Scissors, American Scrapbooks from the Civil War to the Harlem Renaissance.* Oxford University Press, 2013. 304 pages and 62 Illustrations. ISBN 978-0199927692. Price: \$29.95 (softcover).

Ellen Gruber Garvey reveals a previously unexplored layer of American popular culture, where the proliferating cheap press touched the lives of activists and mourning parents, and all who yearned for a place in history. Scrapbook makers documented their feelings about momentous public events such as living through the Civil War, mediated through the newspapers. African Americans and women's rights activists collected, concentrated, and critiqued accounts from a press that they did not control to create "unwritten histories" in books they wrote with scissors. Whether scrapbook makers pasted their clippings into blank books, sermon collections, or the pre-gummed scrapbook that Mark Twain invented, they claimed ownership of their reading. They created their own democratic archives. This book explains how their scrapbooks underlie our present-day ways of thinking about information, news, and what we do with it. Garvey devotes chapter 2 to a discussion of Mark Twain's self-pasting scrapbook. [Excerpt from publisher's website.]

Graysmith, Robert. *Black Fire: The True Story of the Original Tom Sawyer and of the Mysterious Fires That Baptized Gold Rush-Era San Francisco.* Crown 2012. 288 pages. Illustrations by the author. ISBN 978-0307720566. Price: \$26.00 (hardcover).

Black Fire is the most thorough and accurate account of Sawyer's relationship with Mark Twain and of the six devastating incendiary fires that baptized one of the modern world's favorite cities. Drawing on archival sources such as actual San Francisco newspaper interviews with Sawyer and the handwritten police depositions of the arrest of the Lightkeeper, bestselling author Robert Graysmith vividly portrays the gritty, corrupt, and violent world of Gold Rush-era San Francisco, overrun with gunfighters, hooligans, hordes of gold prospectors, crooked politicians, and vigilantes. By chronicling how Sawyer took it upon himself to investigate, expose, and stop the arsonist, *Black Fire* details—for the first time—Sawyer's remarkable life and illustrates why Twain would later feel compelled to name his iconic character after his San Francisco buddy when he wrote *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. [Excerpt from Amazon.com.]

Lee, Judith Yaross. *Twain's Brand: Humor in Contemporary American Culture.* University of Mississippi Press, 2012. 240 pages, printed case binding, b/w and color illustrations, ISBN 978-1-61703-643-9. Price: \$55.00.

Samuel L. Clemens lost the 1882 lawsuit declaring his exclusive right to use "Mark Twain" as a commercial trademark, but he succeeded in the marketplace, where synergy among his comic journalism, live performances, authorship, and entrepreneurship made "Mark Twain" the premier national and international brand of American humor in his day. And so it remains in ours, because Mark Twain's humor not only expressed views of self and society well ahead of its time, but also anticipated ways in which humor and culture coalesce in today's postindustrial →[see p. 7]

information economy—the global trade in media, performances, and other forms of intellectual property that began after the Civil War. In *Twain's Brand: Humor in Contemporary American Culture*, Judith Yaross Lee traces four hallmarks of Twain's humor that are especially significant today. Mark Twain's invention of a stage persona comically conflated with his biographical self lives on in contemporary performances by Garrison Keillor, Margaret Cho, Jerry Seinfeld, and Jon Stewart. The postcolonial critique of Britain that underlies America's nationalist tall tale tradition not only self-destructs in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* but also drives the critique of American Exceptionalism in Philip Roth's literary satires. The semiliterate writing that gives *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* its "vernacular vision"—wrapping cultural critique in ostensibly innocent transgressions and misunderstandings—has a counterpart in the apparently untutored drawing style and social critique seen in *The Simpsons*, Lynda Barry's comics, and *The Boondocks*. And the humor business of recent decades depends on the same brand-name promotion, cross-media synergy, and copyright practices that Clemens pioneered and fought for a century ago. *Twain's Brand* highlights the modern relationship among humor, commerce, and culture that were first exploited by Mark Twain. [Excerpt from publisher's website.]

Articles Briefly Noted:

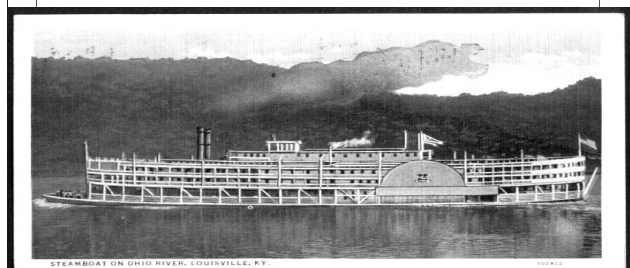
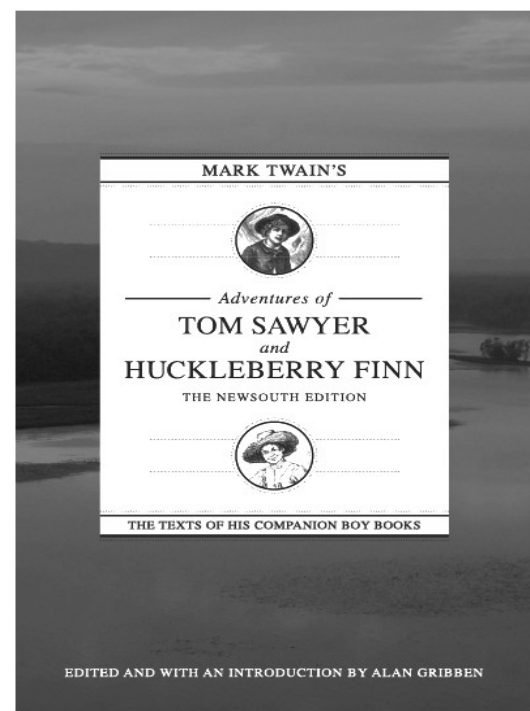
Piacentino, Ed. "Recontextualizing Mark Twain's 'A True Story'." *The Mark Twain Annual* 9 (2011): 31-43; and, "Two Views of Niagara: Doesticks and Mark Twain." *The Journal of American Culture* 35.4 (2012): 346-358.

DVD Review Briefly Noted:

Wes Britton's review of the Claymation Adventures of Mark Twain Collector's Edition: <http://blogcritics.org/video/article/blu-ray-review-the-adventures-of2/>.

Books Received by MTC: NewSouth Tom and Huck:

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* are available either as separate books (\$12.95) or combined in a single volume (\$24.95). The three NewSouth Editions (NewSouth Books, 2011, Ed. Alan Gribben) translate the n-word as "slave" but the three Original Text Editions (NewSouth Books, 2011) faithfully reproduce Twain's language, including the racial slurs. The pagination is the same in each corresponding book, so that instructors and students are able to elect their preferred version. Gribben's "Introduction" endeavors to show fresh ways to approach the novels by viewing them as a complete unit written in two installments, re-interpreting Hemingway's famous appraisal, reevaluating the ending of *Huckleberry Finn*, focusing on Twain's deeper message in the latter novel, and thinking about his satirical targets in both works.



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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*).

Thanks to Jim Leonard (The Citadel) and Sophia Stolarz (Dominican University) for their valuable help on this *MTC* issue.