



Mark Twain Circular

Newsletter of the Mark Twain Circle of America

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Number 1

Nick Karanovich

Long-time Mark Twain collector and scholar Nick Karanovich died January 11, 2003. He was 64.

Mr. Karanovich was born in Clinton, Indiana, February 23, 1938. After attending school in Clinton, he received a bachelor of science degree from Indiana University and a master's from St. Francis College.

He began his education career teaching in the Fort Wayne, Indiana public schools, a career that would span 37 years. One of Karanovich's goals was a magnet school to be devoted to excellence in education. His dream was realized with the formation of Memorial Park Middle School in Fort Wayne in 1979, a school he planned and developed and served as principal from 1979 to 2000. The school concentrated on the fine arts, foreign language and a strong academic program. The school received wide recognition and attracted worldwide visitors.

He wanted to know every student in the building and attended most of the school's events. He selected the finest teachers he could find and added innovations like an art gallery, a performing room, and a creating suite. His goal of excellence was reflected in the teachers, the students and the community.

Nick was internationally known as an expert on Mark Twain books and memorabilia. He amassed one of the premier collections of Mark Twain items, always striving for the best quality. Part of his collection of movie posters for films related to Mark Twain works was displayed at the Mark Twain Museum in 1998. Special exhibitions of his collection were shown at Indiana University, at Kennesaw State University and at the Arnot Art Museum in Elmira,

New York.

Nick's passion for collecting Mark Twain memorabilia started in the mid-1960s. He secured books (specializing in first editions), letters, manuscripts, and every form of memorabilia related to Mark Twain. Catalogues for portions of his collection and for the various displays were produced. His collection of photographs led to publication of a book on Mark Twain's round-the-world lecture tour of 1895-96.

Nick served in an advisory capacity for both the Mark Twain Museum in Hannibal, Missouri, and the Mark Twain House in Hartford, Connecticut. He served on the Board of Directors for the Mark Twain Home Foundation in Hannibal from 1998 until his death.

When it came to sharing his knowledge, Nick always offered sound advice. He would often go out of his way to assist fellow collectors. Once, he even drove 400 miles in order to provide a personal tour of an exhibit of his collection *for one person*. He lectured widely, often at very prestigious events and places—including Elmira, the Rowfant Club in Cleveland, and even the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis.

Because there isn't any Mark Twain bibliography suitable to the needs of a serious collector, he compiled "A Mark Twain Collector's List" in 1985. It lists 77 references including journals, books, guides, and manuscripts that were chosen for their "special contributions to the accumulated knowledge of collecting Mark Twain." Nick's advice in the foreword of this list reveals as much about his pursuit of excellence as it provides wisdom to fellow collectors:

Collecting Mark Twain is an immensely pleasurable, personally satisfying, exhilarating and infectious pursuit. For a collection to gain significance, charm, and character, one must provide it with en-



Nick Karanovich

ergy, enthusiasm and the pursuit of excellence. It requires lofty sights, planning, risk taking, dreaming and romantic aspirations.

The most important physical factor of a book is its condition. To the careful collector condition is not just important: it is everything. Maintaining the condition and continuously upgrading the items are paramount. One must make every effort to obtain material in the best condition.

Nick's passion often led him to develop creative methods of acquisition. At book fairs Nick was always the first person in line, so as to increase the odds of obtaining the best items available. This enabled him to mingle with the dealers as they were setting up so as to ascertain who had what prior to the opening of the fair. Sometimes there would even be a race to a particular booth upon the opening of a fair, and Nick always ended up the winner. Another creative method was Nick's arranging air travel to be on the same flight as a dealer when going to a book fair or Mark Twain event. On more than one occasion he actually purchased rare Twain memorabilia at 30,000 feet above the earth. Nick's devotion to Mark Twain collecting excellence yielded the finest and most extensive collection in private hands.

Not surprisingly, Nick developed

and taught the only course on collecting Mark Twain ever held at an academic institution. Taught at the Lilly Library on the campus of Indiana University in 1998, the course drew on resources that included a large reference collection of rare books and manuscripts, choice high spots from his collection, and guest speakers. At the end of the course he was provided with a richly deserved standing ovation.

—Bob Slotta and Henry Sweets

The Circular and The Annual

Beginning in 2003 the Mark Twain Circle will publish only two issues of the *Mark Twain Circular* per year instead of four, and the *Circular* will be confined more to Circle news and current bibliography, with fewer scholarly articles than in the past. Circle members will receive, in addition to the *Circular*, *The Mark Twain Annual*, to be edited by John Bird (Winthrop University). *The Annual* will focus on criticism and pedagogy related to Mark Twain and his works.

Articles, proposals, or queries to be considered for publication in the 2003 issue of *The Mark Twain Annual* should be sent by July 2003 to the editor:

John Bird, Editor
The Mark Twain Annual
250 Bancroft
Department of English
Winthrop University
Rock Hill, SC 29733
birdj@winthrop.edu

The Circle at ALA 2003

Thursday, May 22, 12:30-1:50 p.m.

"Huckleberry Finn on CD-ROM"

Chair: Laura Skandera-Trombley

"The *Huckleberry Finn* CD-ROM," Victor Doyno

"The Scholarly Uses of the *Huckleberry Finn* CD-ROM," John Bird

Saturday, May 24, 8:00-8:50 a.m.

Business Meeting: Mark Twain Circle

Saturday, May 24, 11:00 a.m.-12:20 p.m.

"The Uses of Mark Twain"

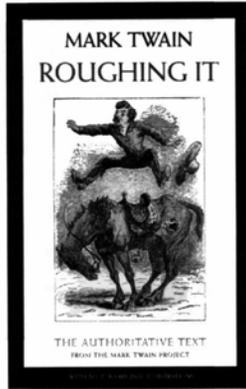
Chair: Tom Quirk

"What Mark Twain Taught Me about Reading," Susan K. Harris

"Tramps and Tourists: Europe in Mark Twain's *A Tramp Abroad*," Peter Messent

"Mark Twain, My Dad, Heidelberg, and Me," Gary Scharnhorst

FAVORITES FROM THE MARK TWAIN LIBRARY



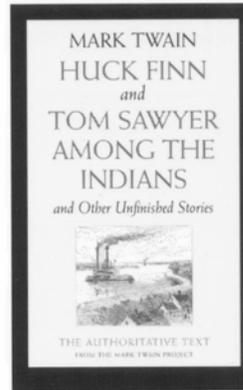
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Most of these selections were never completed, and all were left unpublished. Written between 1868 and 1902, they include a diverse assortment

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Dates to Circle

- **November 14-16, 2003.** South Atlantic Modern Language Association Annual Conference. Atlanta, GA.
- **December 27-30, 2003.** Modern Language Association Annual Conference. San Diego, CA.

To: Prof. Joseph Csicsila
Exec. Coordinator, Mark Twain Circle
English Department
Eastern Michigan University
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

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 \$15.00 (\$16.00 for a non-U.S. address) made out to "Mark Twain Circle of America."

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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 John Bird (Winthrop University) and featuring criticism and pedagogy related to Mark Twain and his 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 Libby Walker and Sarah Brailsford for their valuable work on this issue of the *Mark Twain Circular*.

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