

The Steinbeck Collectors Gazette

This is *The Steinbeck Collectors Gazette*: Volume VII, Number 5, May 2012

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From the Editor

We currently have 154 active members. This month we welcome new members:

Jenny Schoger	SCC # 154
Maury Dunbar	SCC # 155
Margaret Rayburn	SCC # 156
Gregg Orr	SCC # 157

We are interested in increasing our membership. Please give a copy of *The Gazette* to anyone you feel may be interested.

THE EDITOR SOLICITS

This month I would like to ask everyone to send in Member Profiles, Steinbeck Images, and Steinbeck on the Web.

Email me with your thoughts, questions, opinions and comments. Look at the web site –give us your feedback.

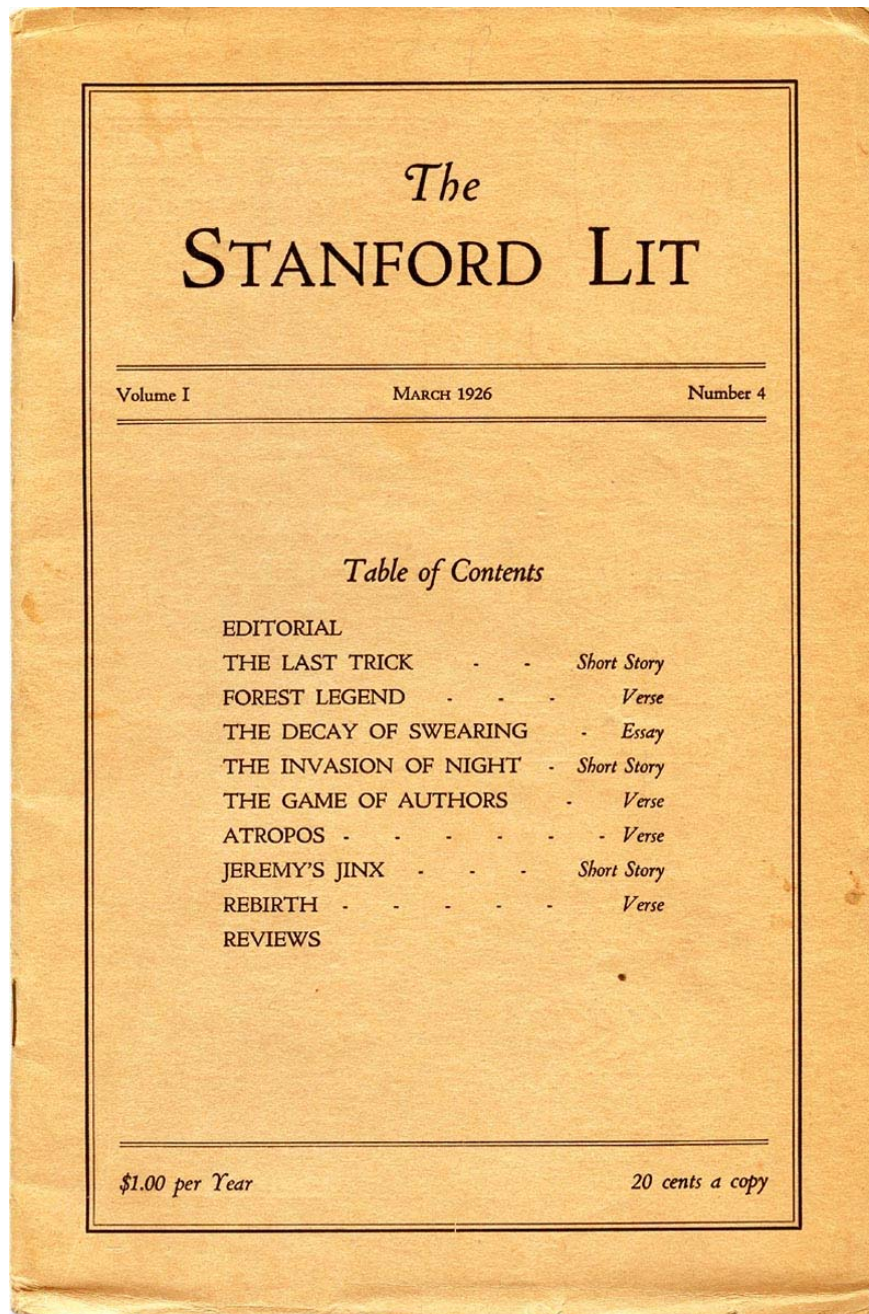
Phil Ralls, Editor

Go to and bookmark the Steinbeck Collectors Club[®] Web Site

<http://www.steinbeckcollectorsclub.org/index.html>

Steinbeck Images

This section is devoted to nearly random images of things Steinbeck. Send in pictures or scans of items you find interesting, beautiful, or unusual



Goldstone and Payne C6 and C7, front cover
2 poems by Steinbeck – *The Game of Authors* and *Atropos*

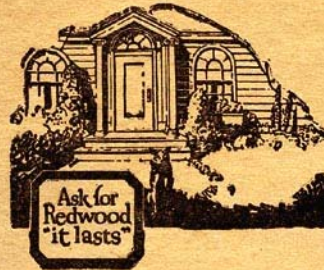
Prohibitively rare periodical - One of the rarest of the rare



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from there on, yourself! And re-
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---and just right in
Style, Quality, Price*

IN

The Gotham Shop
520 Ramona Street
Palo Alto

Goldstone and Payne C6 and C7, rear cover

<http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/3810/the-art-of-fiction-no-45-john-steinbeck>

cc

Letter to the Reverend Leon M. Birkhead — National Director of "Friends of Democracy,"

<http://www.lettersofnote.com/2012/04/american-democracy-will-have.html>

cc

John Steinbeck's *Once There Was A War*

<http://the-reaction.blogspot.com/2012/04/john-steinbecks-once-there-was-war.html>

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Book Reviews and Announcements

Steinbeck in Vietnam: Dispatches From the War

A Great Author Defends an Unwinnable Conflict

by *Don Swaim, SCC # 41*

The University of Virginia Press did the literary reputation of John Steinbeck few favors in publishing *Steinbeck in Vietnam: Dispatches From the War*, edited by Thomas E. Barden. This is not to say Steinbeck admirers would not want a copy of this noteworthy book for their collections. Published in March 2012 in red cloth, the flap shows a price of \$29.95. On the copyright page are the words “First published in 2012” with a number line 9-1.

As it was, despite his many awards and the Nobel Prize in Literature, Steinbeck’s reputation among the intelligentsia and the literary establishment took a disastrous hit in the late 1960s with his enthusiastic support of President Lyndon B. Johnson and the war in Vietnam. The re-publication of these dispatches, originally published in the Long Island newspaper *Newsday* between December 1966 and May 1967, may only re-enforce the perception that Steinbeck was oblivious to what is now widely believed to have been an unjust and unsustainable war. To his credit, however, by the time he returned to the States after five months in Southeast Asia, Steinbeck apparently began having second-thoughts. Unfortunately, illness, followed by his death in 1968, precludes a definitive answer to that question.

For many years, I had wondered why Steinbeck’s Vietnam dispatches had not been gathered into a single volume. After all, virtually every scrap of Steinbeck material has been published and re-published, primarily by the Viking Press—although *The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights* was posthumously published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Barden makes a dubious argument that Steinbeck’s attitude toward the war may have been influenced by his boyhood reading of Malory’s *Morte d’Arthur*. (Steinbeck’s retelling of the Arthurian legend was remaindered at \$2.98 each, and my own copy was rescued from the remainder bin at the B. Dalton Bookstore on Manhattan’s Fifth Avenue.) Nowhere in his informative introduction and afterword does Barden address the question of why Steinbeck’s dispatches remained unpublished in book form until now, so I can only speculate. This dead spot in the Steinbeck oeuvre would be less than palatable to the intellectual and literary elements with whom Steinbeck had achieved respectability.

Steinbeck’s friend and *Newsday* publisher Harry F. Guggenheim asked the author to go to Southeast Asia and report on the war for the daily, which had a circulation of over 400,000. While Guggenheim characterized Steinbeck as a “reporter,” he was not in the usual sense, despite his forays into dangerous combat zones. As an observer and

commentator, Steinbeck titled his essays “Letters to Alicia,” named for Guggenheim’s late wife and former *Newsday* editor. In addressing his columns to her Steinbeck was able to personalize his dispatches as if speaking one-to-one. Steinbeck had other grounds for accepting the assignment. His friendship with President Johnson (a fellow New Deal Democrat), which was solidified by the fact that Steinbeck’s wife was a friend and classmate of Johnson’s wife, Lady Bird. In addition, both of Steinbeck’s sons had been inducted into uniform, and one of them, John IV, was serving in Vietnam.

If Steinbeck’s commitment to the war wasn’t already firmly established (he believed in the provably wrong domino theory), after arriving in Vietnam he quickly bought the official U.S. military line—which was understandable. He was treated as an honored guest by the military brass, assigned an army major to personally escort him by helicopter wherever and whenever he wanted to go, and permitted to attend high military briefings. He traveled with the head of combat operations, General William Westmoreland, and sipped tea with Vietnamese military commander Major General Vinh Loc. He was issued military fatigues and allowed to shoot advanced military weapons. Further, Steinbeck’s wife Elaine accompanied him (hardly customary for a war correspondent), sometimes even into the field. They stayed at Saigon’s Hotel Caravelle with its marble steps and rooftop dining. As an insider, it was all too easy for his perspective to become skewed.

Steinbeck’s literary gift is well demonstrated in these dispatches, nearly sixty of them. His columns are composed in a colorful, conversational style embellished by his usual flair for language and description. He describes the Vietnamese landscape this way: “And finally the mountains, with jungle so dense that the earth is dark at midday, peopled with giants of the most precious hardwoods and movable on the rivers which everywhere cream down the steep mountainsides to the kind of waterfalls we dream of and then slither like serpents to the sea.”

As time went on—as his dispatches demonstrate—he became more and more defensive about the war and highly critical of its opponents.

On January 7, 1967, he wrote of the shame he sometimes felt at home when he saw “the dirty clothes, dirty minds, sour smelling wastelings and their ill-favored and barren paid mates. Their shuffling, drag-ass protests that they are conscience-bound not to kill people are silly.” He described as “pure horse manure” the widely-held contention that the U.S. was interfering in the internal affairs of a foreign country, and that the Vietnamese people should be allowed to settle it themselves.

On February 7, 1967, Steinbeck expressed the hope that writers such as Edward Albee, John Updike, or Truman Capote might see things for themselves “...unblended by preconceptions with minds as yet unfixed in amber.” He alleged that the dispatches of the war correspondents were tailored “...by the established policies of their papers and magazines.”

On February 11, 1967, he lambasted the burgeoning American anti-war movement as composed of “a loud and headline-getting group of so-called Peaceniks or sometimes Berserklyites who do not only support the war and our soldiers but actually do cheer on the enemy.”

On April 22, 1967, he again called on his fellow writers to go to Vietnam “...where the fighting is—sit behind sandbags with the kids they call murderers, fly with the airmen or if they feel particularly adventurous, go with a First Cav strike, hit the ground and take cover, or if they wish to really know something about fear and gallantry, I could wish that they might go on night patrol in the Delta, where every tuft of grass may hiccup a burst of fire and any small stab or pain is probably a needle-pointed punji stick smeared with human excrement and poisonous as a snake bite.”

He wrote on May 20, 1967, “I’ve been accused by the interested but uninvolved of being a warmonger, of favoring war and even celebrating it.... What I have been celebrating is not war but brave men.”

But after a wearying five months in southeast Asia during which he suffered a painful slipped disc, Steinbeck slowly began to adopt a different point of view (well detailed by Barden).

On August 31, 1967, he wrote, “I am pretty sure by now the people running the war have neither conception nor control of it.... I know we cannot win this war, nor any war for that matter. And it seems to me the design is to sink deeper and deeper into it, more and more of us.” After his death, his widow Elaine was emphatic about his conversion from hawk to dove: “John changed his mind totally while there, and he came home to write it and spent the rest of the time dying.”

In his afterword, Barden cites Walter Cronkite’s famous anti-war pronouncement on the *CBS Evening News*, which permanently altered the public’s perception of the war, and wonders if Steinbeck might have had a similar impact: “Would Steinbeck’s famous and trusted voice have changed the course of the war, of the Johnson presidency, of American history?” We’ll never know; however, it’s quite likely that through his dispatches from Vietnam Steinbeck, sadly, actually helped to prolong the war. It will be interesting to see how the world of Steinbeck scholarship will ultimately react to this book’s engrossing portrayal of the mind of John Steinbeck at a difficult time in American history.

Don Swaim won the 2011 Pearl S. Buck International Short Story Award. His quest for an elusive variant of Steinbeck’s *The Red Pony* was described in *The Steinbeck Collectors Club Gazette* in March. Don’s recent ebook, *Bright Sun Extinguished: Ode to Norman Mailer*, is available at Amazon.com. His essay on how Steinbeck and George S. Kaufman turned the theatrical version of *Of Mice and Men* a stunning success can be read at: <http://donswaim.com/steinbeck-kaufman.html>. He is the founder of the web’s definitive Ambrose Bierce Site: <http://donswaim.com/>.

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

Jim Dourgarian on Steinbeck – *Best Film Plays - 1945*

Editor's Note: Jim has agreed to provide us with periodic articles on books by, about or related to John Steinbeck. The only criterion is that he finds them interesting - and I think you will, too!

What's the difference between one totally bitchin' copy of *The Grapes of Wrath* and another placed side by side? Nothing. What's the difference between your collection and that of someone else placed side by side? The answer is very likely to be the same -- nothing. It is only when you color your collection, when you personalize it, when you make it reflective of your taste and style that you set your collection apart from others. How do you do this? There are many ways. Think broadly. Don't be so rigid as to confine your collection to just books. Maybe you could add a movie poster or two from your favorite films made from Steinbeck's stories. Maybe you could add some interesting periodical appearances by Steinbeck. Have you ever heard Steinbeck speak?

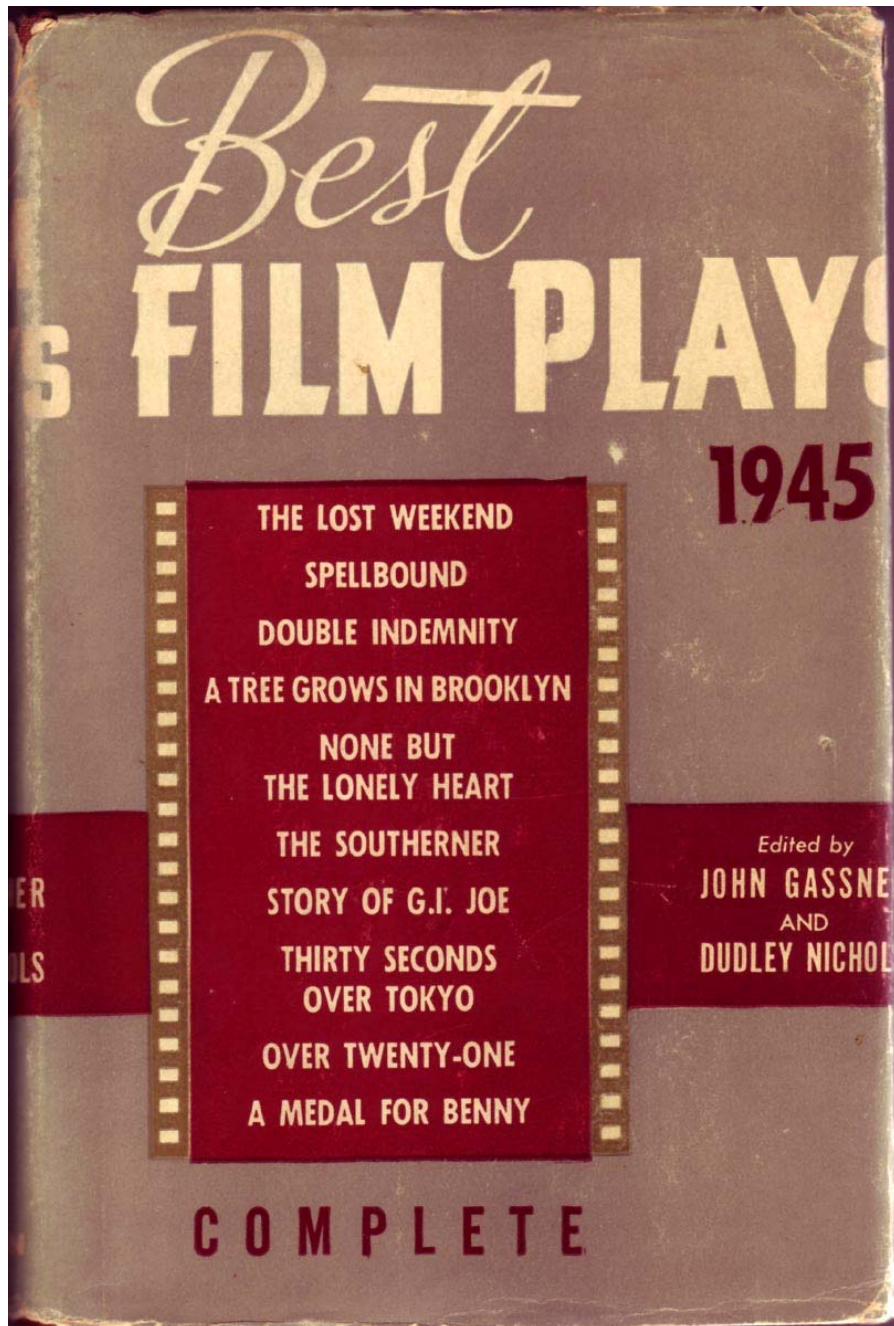
There are spoken word records out there where he reads two of his short stories. Steinbeck also appears on-camera in a couple of films. Copies are available. Any collection should include some material about your favorite author. Certainly anyone with a collection worth a damn should have the Goldstone & Payne bibliography and the Morrow catalogue. And, occasionally, as budgets allow, buy something out of the ordinary. Find something possibly unique. Starting now and for the next several months I will present items that might fit.

Best Film Plays - 1945

Gassner, John and Nichols, Dudley (editors). *Best Film Plays - 1945*. NY, Crown, 1946, first edition, dust jacket. Hardcover. Includes Frank Butler's screenplay for *A Medal for Benny* in its entirety, includes credits, setting, and text, 589-648, it also includes b&w photos from the film which was based on a story by John Steinbeck and his boyhood friend, Jack Wagner, Goldstone & Payne B45, not recorded by Morrow, it also includes the screenplays for *Lost Weekend*, *Spellbound*, *Double Indemnity* (Raymond Chandler), and several others.

You don't normally think of *A Medal for Benny* as a prize winner of a film, but it surely made this list, and a good list it is. It appears that 1945 was a good year for films. This book includes screenplays for *The Lost Weekend*, *Spellbound*, *Double Indemnity*, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, *The Story of G.I. Joe*, *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*, etc. Writers include Billy Wilder, Ben Hecht, Raymond Chandler, Clifford Odets, Guy Endore, Dalton Trumbo. Good stuff, eh? So I guess there are other reasons to be interested in a book other than John Steinbeck's relationship to same. What a concept! In this case we also have a Steinbeck connection. He and boyhood friend Jack Wagner (brother of Max,

son of Edith Wagner--see *How Edith McGillcuddy Met Robert Louis Stevenson*) developed the story while Frank Butler wrote the actual screenplay. The film starred Dorothy Lamour. You may remember her as the continuing star of Bob Hope's "Road" movies. As a young boy and young man, I never fancied her much, but as a bit older man who became a bookseller, I fell in love with the giant image of her used in the posters for this film. Can you say Hot Stuff? She starred with Arthur de Cordova and J. Carrol Naish, among others.



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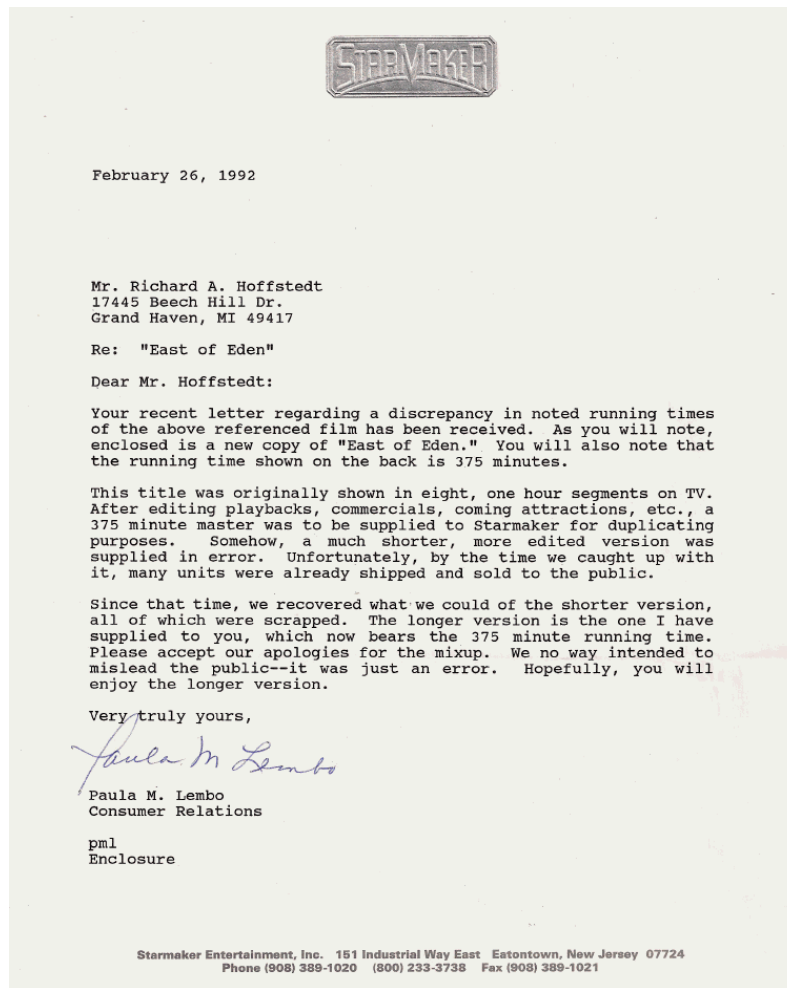
wrong. They had even edited out much of the story. In fact, the actual running time was 195 minutes, not the 238 minutes as printed on the sleeve.

I immediately wrote to Starmaker Entertainment, Inc. in New Jersey and told them I felt cheated with my purchase. I explained everything to them.

Some time later, I received a new VHS tape at no cost and a letter from Starmaker (see attachment) explaining the mix-up. I now had two versions of the mini-series. The new one stated 375 minutes on the sleeve and actually runs for 378 minutes...a three minute bonus.

Now, my question to collectors is this. How many of those edited editions actually got out to the public? The letter only states "many units were already shipped and sold to the public." Does this error on their part make that edited edition "rare" and therefore may be valuable to collectors? I would like to hear from Gazette collectors of Steinbeck films.

Editor's Note: I neglected to print the image of the letter from Starmaker Entertainment that Dick sent to us last time. Here it is.



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From Whiffen Larry, SCC # 145

Question [7:2-2]

Years ago a friend from Sag Harbor gave me a copy (old-style mimeo, heavy stock) of a broadside. His sister was proprietor of the 5 & 10 on Main Street for many years. The piece measures 6 1/4"x 19 1/4". It is titled A Manifesto and it is written in Steinbeck's hand, a preamble to the second annual old whalers festival in Sag Harbor.

Steinbeck was one of the originators of this festival, which continues to this day. This broadside is so revelatory because it reveals the author as one of the guys at the tavern, not the literary icon. It is loose and gets looser from top to bottom. It feels like he was taking his time, laughing at the bar as he was composing this amongst friends. Indeed, without saying, he is telling them exactly why he came to live there.



There are pinholes in the corners as if several copies were run off and posted about the village. Sag Harbor Historical Museum could shed no more light. I have sent along a photo of this broadside as well as a transcript of the text. Anyone who knows more about it, please tell me.

NOTE: This was transcribed from a photocopy of the original broadside written in his own hand and posted in the village by Steinbeck.

This is the second annual Sag Harbor Old Whalers Festival and it promises to be even more reverent and memorial and confused and historical and crazy than the one last year. It is Sag Harbor's answer to automation. For one thing, much research has gone into this festival and we now know more about the original old whalers than some of them would want us to.

We made some mistakes last year which helps because now we can make the same mistakes quicker and easier, and go on to new errors.

One of these will be a whale boat race participated in by Sag Harbor

MANIFESTO Preamble to the Old Whalers Festival's second annual journal defending against the neighboring towns for the Cetacean Cup. This is no clocked affair. The flower of our youth and strength will man the sweeps, each whale boat driving down the harbor. The winning boat gets the first harpoon in a genuine artificial whale. And if that isn't an invitation to mayhem I don't know what is.

The resurrected sport is so new that it has no ground rules as yet. We may have to get some later to save life and limb but not this year. However, the race may prove that there is as much blubber now as there was in the old days.

But this is only one of many fascinating, historical and improbable events. There will be parades and reenactments – a beard judging and a beauty contest for fish.

We aim to experiment with a beach buggy contest over a course like a lunar landscape. No one can foresee what will happen here but the prospects are dreadful and beautiful to contemplate. But after all the Old Whalers whom we celebrate lived dangerously, and we cannot let them down.

Not all attention will be on blood sports. Youth and beauty of the feminine persuasion will preside over the dancing and music together with many romantic inventions and conceits – all designed to create a Dionysiac spirit of quid pro quo. and the quoter the better.

(Note) North Sea will participate in the festival which is a guarantee of enthusiasm even if the insurance rates do go up.

Harborites have been working and planning and practicing for this celebration for many months. We want to make our guests welcome only promising to clobber them if they get out of hand. We hope we are not over trained.

The fact that I have been made Honorary Chairman of the Old Whalers Festival is a clear indication of the explosive but cautious thinking of the descendants of the Old Whalers. If all goes well, we share the happiness but if the village blows up, I get the blame.

I don't know how I got here. I am only a sixth class citizen. It takes six generations for first class. But my neighbors are considerate and kind to me.

Anyway, we hope you will enjoy our festival. Complaints may be made in Riverhead or will be individually taken care of behind Otter Pond and perhaps in it.

*JOHN STEINBECK
Honorary Chairman and running scared*

cc

From Dick Hoffstedt, SCC # 7

Question [7:2-3]

I have questions about two items.

Many years ago (probably 20) I picked up two catalogs pertaining to collecting Steinbeck. The first was called "Books & Pamphlets by John Steinbeck" published by Bradford Morrow, LTD. It had 70 pages, 280 entries and measured 5 1/2" X 8 1/2." The first thirteen entries listed various editions of "Cup of Gold." Entry No. 279 was "John Steinbeck and his Language", and it listed for \$175. The last entry (No. 280) was "Steinbeck: A Life In Letters" and listed for \$75. The second book was called "The

Collectible John Steinbeck." It had 157 pages and was also 5 1/2" X 8 1/2." It had an Alphabetical List of Steinbeck Editions. The first entry (No. 1) was for "The Acts of King Arthur and his Noble Knights" and listed seven different editions designated a. through g. The second entry (No. 2) was "America and Americans" and listed six different editions designated a. through f. The last entry (No. 62) was for "The Winter of Our Discontent" and listed 15 different editions designated a. through o. The last pages (153-157) had a chronological check list of Steinbeck's major works.

Both catalogs gave an approximate market value for each edition depending on condition. What I would like to know is if there are updated copies of either, or both, of these catalogs?

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Steinbeck Notes and Quotes – Herb Behrens SCC # 7

Herb Behrens has agreed to provide us from time to time with interesting quotes and bits of information on John Steinbeck.

At J. Edgar Hoover's direction the FBI kept detailed files on American writers they considered subversive and dangerous. Steinbeck was "monitored from 1939 to March 1968, 9 months before he died." - *Working Days*.

Webster F. Street was Steinbeck's schoolmate, lifelong friend and lawyer. He was immortalized by Steinbeck in *Sweet Thursday* with "The Webster F. Street Lay-Away-Plan" - a martini made with chartreuse instead of vermouth" - *Working Days*.

Steinbeck gave the manuscript of *The Grapes of Wrath* to Carol. Later, she sold it to John Howell for \$2,000; he sold it to the University of Virginia for \$2,500. In 1975 it was valued at \$90,000. - *Steinbeck: a Life in Letters*

After *The Grapes of Wrath* was published, "Carol turned down the most absurd offer of all yesterday, to write a script in Hollywood. Carol - over the telephone: 'What the hell would we do with \$5,000 a week? Don't bother us!'" - *Steinbeck: a Life in Letters*.

The Grapes of Wrath dropped from first place on the best seller list. In October, 1939 he wrote Elizabeth Otis that "One nice thing to think of is the speed of obscurity. Grapes is not first now. In a month it will be off the list and in six months I'll be forgotten" - *Steinbeck: a Life in Letters*.

In 1939, he wrote Carlton Sheffield; "... I must make a new start. I've worked the novel - I know it as far as I can take it. I never did think much of it - a clumsy vehicle at best." - *Steinbeck: a Life in Letters*

In 1940, he wrote to Elizabeth Otis that "... our income tax ... will be something like forty thousand dollars with state and federal. But don't think we are crabbing." - *Steinbeck: a Life in Letters*

Just before he and Ed left for the Sea of Cortez, he asked Elizabeth Otis if she thought she "could sell the log as a series of articles?" - *Steinbeck: a Life in Letters*.

In April, 1940, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt made an inspection tour of California migrant camps. When a reporter questioned her, she replied "I never have thought *The Grapes of Wrath* was exaggerated." - *Steinbeck: a Life in Letters*

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WANT LISTS

James M. Dourgarian, SCC #20

All the items on this want list MUST be like new, as new, very fine. bookman@jimbooks.com

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nothing So Monstrous, G&P A2f. 2. Tortilla Flat, G&P A4d. 3. The Moon Is Down (Play), G&P A17a. 4. How Edith McGillcuddy Met R. L. S., G&P A20. 5. The Pearl, G&P A25a. 6. A Russian Journal, G&P A27a. 7. The Short Novels of John Steinbeck, G&P A30a. 8. Viva Zapata!, G&P A31. 9. The Winter of Our Discontent, G&P A38a. 10. America and Americans, G&P A43a. |
|--|

Phil Ralls, SCC #25

Email me at <mailto:steinbeck.collectors.club@gmail.com>

MAGAZINES

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Stanford Spectator, Vol. 2, no. 9 (February 1924) The Stanford Lit, Vol. 1, no. 4 (March 1926) Smoker’s Companion Magazine, March 1927, vol. 1, no. 1 (March 1927) The North American Review Vol. 236, no. 5 (November 1933) The North American Review Vol. 239, no. 3 (March 1935) The Nation Vol. 143, no. 11 (September 12, 1936) Monthly Record [Connecticut State Prison] Vol. 41, no. 8 (June 1938) The Progressive Weekly Vol. 2, no. 53 (December 24, 1938, The Progressive Weekly, Vol. 3, no. 17 (April 29, 1939) The Progressive Weekly, Vol. 3, no. 18 (May 6, 1939) National Digest, Vol. 5, no. 5 (November 1944) |
|---|

BOOKS, CATALOGS

Wanted in ANY Condition

- Pacific Biological Laboratories Catalog, 1925
- Forward to Between Pacific Tides, 1948
- Viva Zapata! – Edizioni Filmcritica, No. 1, 1953

Wanted in strict VG or Better Condition

- Nothing So Monstrous, 1936
- Of Mice and Men: A Play in Three Acts, 1937
- The Red Pony, 1937
 - a. With original glassine (in G or Better)
- Their Blood Is Strong, 1st Printing, 1938
- Tortilla Flat, A Play in Three Acts – Kirkland, 1938
- The Moon Is Down: Play in Two Parts, 1942
- A Letter From John Steinbeck Explaining Why He Could Not Write An Introduction to this Book, 1964

Wanted in strict FINE or Better Condition

- The Long Valley, 1938
- The Forgotten Village, 1941
- The Viking Portable Library Steinbeck, 1943
- A Russian Journal, 1948
- The Log From the Sea of Cortez, 1951
- Chapter 34 from the Novel East of Eden, 1952

cc

Privacy Notice

Your email address will be protected (provided I don't get hacked or subpoenaed!) and not distributed to anyone. If you wish to contact a member offline, post a message with your contact information, or contact me. Ultimately we may have a club member only address book, but that is in the future, when and if we have a web site.

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Member Web Sites and Email Addresses⁴

This information is provided to any SCC member who wants to make their web site or emails known to other club members. If you wish to appear here, please email me.

Email Addresses

Robert B. Harmon, SCC # 1 - Click on following link to send mail -
<mailto:bharm@pacbell.net>

John Wood, SCC # 64
jwood@salinas.k12.ca.us

Web Sites

- Martha Heasley Cox Center for Steinbeck Studies, Paul Douglass, SCC # 22,
Sstoz Tes, SCC # 50
www.steinbeck.sjsu.edu
- PBA Galleries, George Fox SCC # 47
<http://www.pbagalleries.com/>
- Bill Groneman, SCC # 40
www.WGroneman.com
- Daniel Zirilli, SCC # 5
www.popartfilmfactory.com
- Mike Wildman, SCC # 30
<http://www.aboundbookcompany.com/>
- Greta Manville. SCC # 61
www.gretamanville.com
- Michael Tholl, SCC # 12
<http://www.waywardbooks.com/>

⁴ Listing in this section is a revocable privilege, not a right of membership. Entries are placed here at the sole discretion of the editor who may decline to post the information or remove it without cause.

- The National Steinbeck Center, Colleen Bailey, SCC # 85
<http://www.steinbeck.org/MainFrame.html>
- James M. Dourgarian, Bookman, Jim Dourgarian, SCC # 20
<http://www.jimbooks.com/>
- Between the Covers Rare Books, Dan Gregory, SCC # 27
<http://www.betweenthecovers.com>
- Ball State University, Bracken Library, John Straw SCC # 78
<http://www.bsu.edu/library/>
- Brian Cassidy, Bookseller, SCC # 70
books@briancassidy.net
<http://www.briancassidy.net>
twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/briancassidy>
- CANNERY ROW FOUNDATION WEBSITE, Michael Hemp, SCC # 126
Check for upcoming events
<http://www.canneryrow.org>
- Bill Steigerwald, SCC # 129 – Website at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
<http://communityvoices.sites.post-gazette.com/index.php/arts-entertainment-living/travels-without-charley>

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