

Celebrating a long life: *The Nautilus* turns 120!

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The Nautilus is turning 120 years this year and I feel extremely honored and lucky to be writing this note to celebrate the occasion! *The Nautilus* is the one of the two oldest English-language malacological journals, second only to the *Journal of Conchology* in longevity in this category. My goal is to briefly showcase, particularly to readers from younger generations, some highlights of the journal's evolution and of the work of its editors.

AN INAUSPICIOUS BEGINNING?

The Nautilus started in Philadelphia in July, 1886, as *The Conchologists' Exchange* (TCE). William D. Averell (1853–1928), a shell trader from Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, created TCE as a small publication aimed at “giving information of vital interest to the student of Mollusca” (Averell, 1886a).

In November of that same year Averell (1886b) observed: “It is our desire that each number shall be an improvement upon its predecessor; . . . It is inevitable that new discoveries will continue to be made in our chosen field of research from now until the end of time, as vast areas have yet to be fully explored and their treasures described; and, again numerous species are rapidly becoming extinct, while others are scarcely known or have never had the light of discovery cast upon them.” Averell's words proved to be mostly prophetic in the long run. But the immediate future of TCE was uncertain. Starting in May, 1888, after 21 months of publication, the periodical went out of circulation for one year.

Former editor R. Tucker Abbott in his dedication of the 100th volume (1986) of the journal observed that “*The Nautilus* had a very inauspicious beginning. . . . Volume 1, number 1, was merely a postcard sent out to 500 people announcing that the annual subscription price . . . would be all of 25 cents.” The first two volumes each consisted of a few pages published monthly in a duodecimo (12 mo) size (16.5×14 cm). The contents of TCE covered specimen exchange notices for collectors, short articles about collecting and preservation of mollusks, news, and brief narratives of field trips, sometimes to distant and exotic places such as Tampa, Florida.

PILSBRY TO THE RESCUE

Young conchologist and TCE contributor Henry Augustus Pilsbry (1862–1957) (Figure 1) was hired as conservator of the Conchological Section of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia (ANSP) in 1888, a few weeks after he turned 25. After a year's lapse and following negotiations between Pilsbry and Averell, in May, 1889, TCE became *The Nautilus* (volume 3, number 1), with Pilsbry as its editor. The journal size was adjusted to crown octavo (about 19×13 cm).

In his first number Pilsbry changed the physical format of the journal from double-column to single-column. In addition, he prominently displayed, starting on page 2, a brief technical article by W. H. Dall (1889) on the anatomy of the gastropod *Trochus infundibulum*. Dall's paper, which differed considerably in style and content from the average note and exchange notice previously published in TCE, marked the beginning of Pilsbry's shift in orientation of the journal. That change gave *The Nautilus* a new lease on life.

In all likelihood, Pilsbry assumed from the start that the reorganization of TCE as the more science-oriented *The Nautilus* was the natural thing to do. In the very first sentence of the Introduction to volume 3 (Pilsbry, 1889) the 26 year-old editor observed: “The publishers of *The Nautilus* feel that no explanation of their [objective] in offering this journal to the scientific public is necessary.”

On the same page, he indicated that it was his wish to have malacological papers concentrated in a few specialized periodicals rather than in “the pages of innumerable [general science] journals.” By “establishing journals devoted to special branches of science” such as malacology, it would be possible to “limit by some means the number of publications in which a certain subject is likely to be treated upon.”

Possibly anticipating a decline in interest from subscribers, Pilsbry proposed that, upon the transition from TCE to *The Nautilus*, “All subscribers . . . will be allowed one insertion of twenty-five words in the Exchange Column, free of charge.” The appeal to a diverse audience was epitomized in a brick-colored, promotional 15.2×8.2 cm flyer (Figure 2) published sometime in the early 1890s. The flyer proffered: “Its scope is broad, including

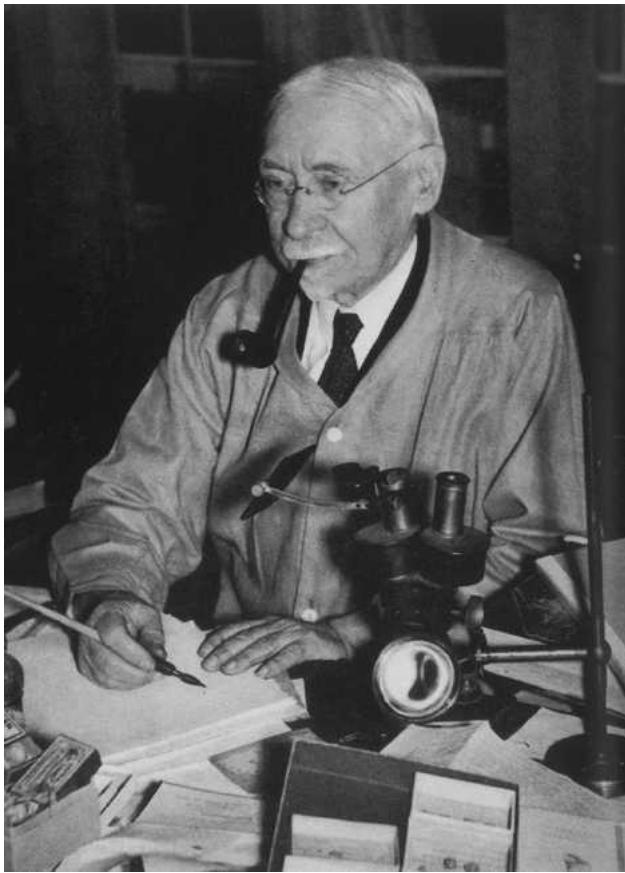


Figure 1. Henry Augustus Pilsbry, 1862–1957; editor 1889–1957. Photo *The Nautilus* archives.

articles on recent and fossil shells . . . Notes . . . showing the drift of opinion on conchological subjects, are a valuable feature". In addition, the footer of the flyer announced: "Exchange column free to subscribers." The subscription price was \$1.00 per year, \$1.12 to foreign countries.

W. D. Averell remained as business manager of *The Nautilus* after the transition until the end of 1890. According to Baker (1958b), "His [Pilsbry's] one year's association with William D. Averell as its business manager was none too happy and, at the end of one volume, Averell was replaced by . . . Charles W. Johnson . . ." In a brief obituary of Averell, Pilsbry (1928) remarked: "He was deeply interested in conchology, but made no permanent collection. He was chiefly known as a dealer in shells and in connection with his little journal, which proved to be highly useful for bringing together the conchologists and collectors of the late '80s."

Pilsbry's tenure as editor of *The Nautilus* equaled in length and paralleled his long and productive career as a scientist (see Baker, 1958a); he edited the new version of the "little journal" between 1888 and 1957, a 69-year editorial stint probably unmatched in duration in the world of malacological publications. Pilsbry unquestionably consolidated the reputation of *The Nautilus* as a

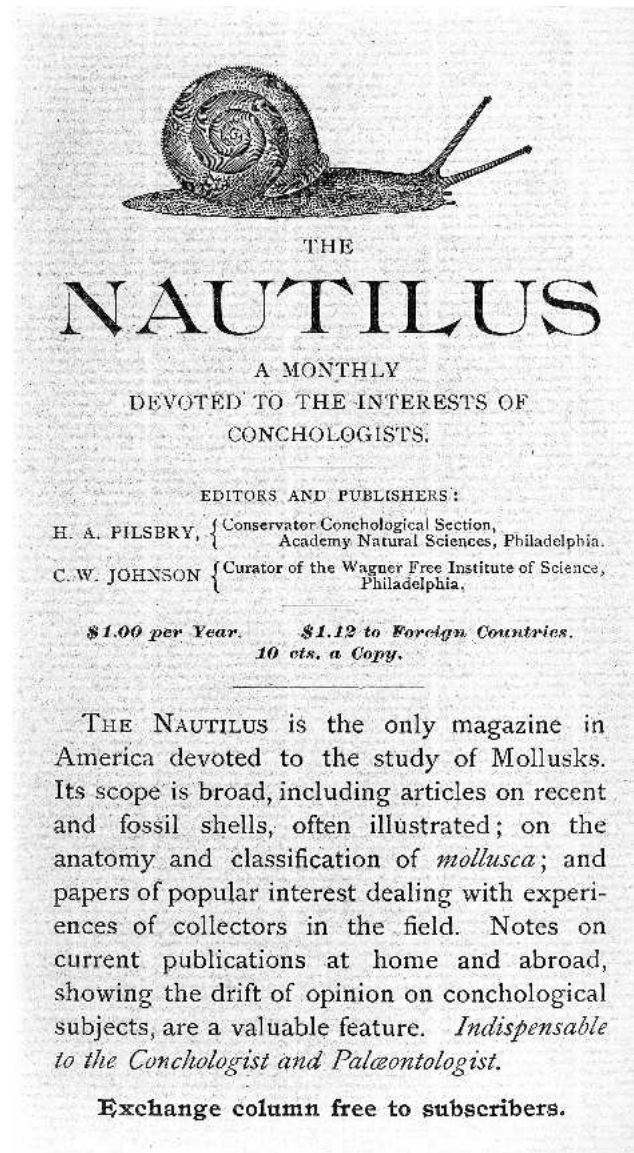


Figure 2. Promotional flyer, circa early 1890s. Note emphasis on scientific aspects combined with appeals to the non-professional audience of the journal. The line drawing portrays North American land snail *Xolotrema denotatum* (Férussac, 1821). The same drawing appeared earlier, as *Helix palliata* Say, in Binney (1857), Binney and Bland (1869), and Teator (1890).

cutting-edge publication dealing with the many facets of 20th Century malacology. Pilsbry's biographers commented about his fortitude and love for *The Nautilus* to the very end. Daughter Elizabeth Pilsbry (1958) observed: "Of Father, at nearly 95, one truly may say: 'He died young.'"

EARLY BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Pilsbry was aided for most of his career as editor of *The Nautilus* by Charles Willison Johnson (1863–1932) (Figure 3). Johnson was curator at the Wagner Free Institute

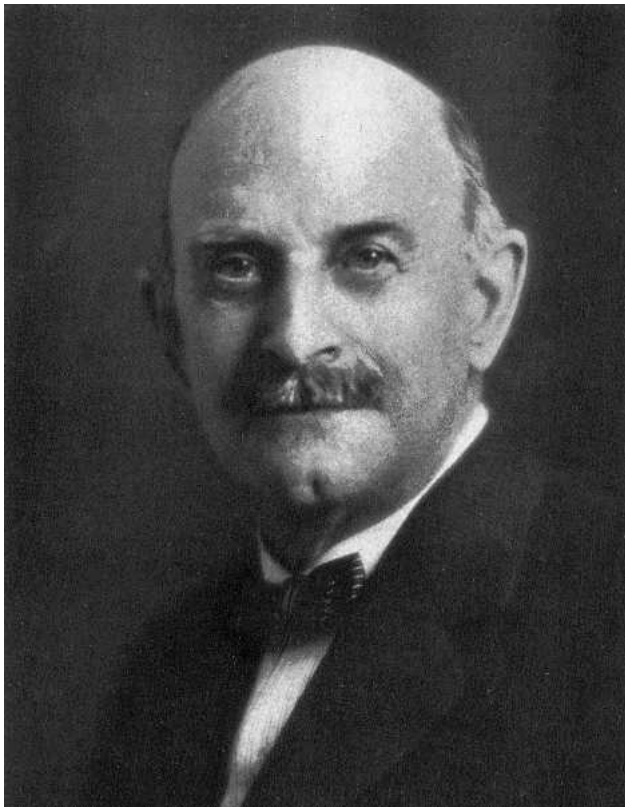


Figure 3. Charles Willison Johnson, 1863–1932; business manager 1890–1932. Photo Museum Comparative Zoology, Harvard University.

of Philadelphia between 1888 and 1903; from 1903 to his death in 1932 he was principal curator of the Boston Society of Natural History. Early in his career as curator at the Wagner Institute, Johnson replaced W. D. Averell in 1890 as business manager of *The Nautilus*.

New England malacologist Arthur Fairfield Gray (Gray, 1932) remarked about Johnson's role with *The Nautilus*: “[Pilsbry's] choice was most fortunate; Johnson established the most cordial relations with subscribers and contributors. During extended periods, when Dr. Pilsbry was away on collecting trips, he acted as editor as well as business manager.” Gray commented on the personal relation between the two editors: “In those days *The Nautilus* was a monthly. This co-partnership and intimate friendship continued for forty-two years, until terminated by Mr. Johnson's death.” Figure 4 portrays a sample of Johnson's ledger work in the early 20th Century as business manager of *The Nautilus*.

Horace Burrington Baker (1889–1971) (Figure 5), Professor of Zoology at the University of Pennsylvania and a specialist in terrestrial gastropods, became business manager of the journal upon the death of Charles W. Johnson in 1932. Baker served as an associate editor for 25 years. Abbott and Wurtz (1971) remarked that Baker “was one of America's outstanding land mollusk anatomists.” He was also an excellent illustrator, as attested by the exquisite anatomical drawings in his works.

LIFE AFTER PILSBRY

After Pilsbry's death in December, 1957, Baker published a memorial issue (volume 71, number 3) appropriately named “The Pilsbry Nautilus”. In that issue, Baker (1958b) observed: “At least twice during September and October, 1957, Dr. Pilsbry implored me to make sure that *The Nautilus* would continue, and solemnly was promised that it would.”

And continue it did. Beginning in April, 1958, with volume 71, number 4, *The Nautilus* was edited by a triumvirate of malacologists led by Baker, now editor-in-chief of the journal. Baker outlined the operations plan for the journal following Pilsbry's death: Charles B. Wurtz (1916–1982) (Figure 6) from Philadelphia, and Robert Tucker Abbott (1919–1995) (Figure 7), newly hired to fill the Pilsbry Chair of Malacology at the ANSP, “will join the staff as junior editors with the understanding that, if at any future time either should cease to be a resident of the Philadelphia area, this would be considered as a tendered resignation” (Baker, 1958b).

R. Tucker Abbott was initially in charge of marine mollusks, Wurtz was responsible for mailing issues and became editor for fresh water mollusks and ecology, and Bernadine B. Baker (“Mrs. Horace B. B.”) tended to the finances and subscriptions. Baker added: “Since the Bakers and *The Nautilus* can afford but one bank account, checks may be made out as usual.” Between April, 1958, (volume 71, number 4) and April, 1972, (volume 85, number 4), *The Nautilus* was subtitled “The Pilsbry Quarterly devoted to the Interests of Conchologists.” Between July, 1936 (volume 50, number 1) and April, 1972 (Volume 85, number 4), text on the second cover indicated that *The Nautilus* was “. . . the official [. . . “an official . . .” in the latter part of that period] organ of the American Malacological Union (now American Malacological Society).”

Baker was editor-in-chief until 1968, and served as Editor Emeritus until the time of his death in 1971. Abbott and Wurtz (1971) reminisced: “For 40 years he gave unstintingly of his time as business manager and editor of *The Nautilus*.”

TUCKER'S TENURE

R. Tucker Abbott had been acting editor of *The Nautilus* since H. B. Baker had his first flurry of health complications in 1968. He left ANSP in that year to occupy the newly created Du Pont Chair of Malacology and serve as assistant director of the Delaware Museum of Natural History. Upon Baker's death in March, 1971, he formally became editor-in-chief of the journal, helped by Charles Wurtz and with Mrs. Baker as business manager.

Tucker edited *The Nautilus* from 1968 through 1985, making several changes in the format and editorial policy that basically shaped the journal as we know it today. Most of these improvements took place in July, 1972, with the publication of volume 86, number 1. This was a very hectic time in Tucker's life; among his many activi-

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4	John B. Henderson	back no.	1 00	24	"	06	
10	L. E. Daniels	Vol 27	1 50	6	Cash book & pad	10	
12	Dr. Paul Bartsch	Vol 27	3 00	8	Postage	12	
12	Orlando Truett	adv. Dec 11 1914	2 00	8	"	40	
12	W. Victor Johnson	Vol 29	1 50	10	"	05	
13	Museum Comp. Zool.	" 29	1 50	11	"	06	
13	Carnegie Museum	" 29	1 50	12	"	05	
18	Acad Natl Sci (Museum Comp)	adv. Dec 11	5 00	18	"	05	
18	Hooker for Smithsonian Institution	Vol 27	1 50	17	"	57	
19	Rev. Prof. Wm. Brewster	" 29	1 14	17	"	17	
19	Hon. Shaw	" 29	1 50	19	"	05	
24	Wm. F. Clapp	" 29	1 50	24	"	05	
24	Calvin Goodrich	" 29	1 50	25	"	06	
24	Prof. Edw. S. Morse	" 29	1 50	28	"	06	
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26	J. H. Aldrich	" 29	1 50				
27	W. D. Cokerell	" 29	1 50				
27	Geo. Wagner	" 29	1 00				
28	James Henderson	" 29	1 50				
28	Dr. J. P. S. ...	" 29	1 50				
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7	Dr. Carlos de la Torre	Vol 27	3 00	5	"	10	
7	H. F. Carpenter	Vol 27	1 50	7	"	12	
7	Dr. Wm. H. Dall	Vol 27	1 50	10	"	07	
7	Commodore ...	" 29	1 50	28	"	16	
7	Frank C. Baker	" 29	1 50	28	"	04	
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26	Dr. V. Slayhi	" 29	1 50	6	"	14	
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30	Dr. R. W. ...	" 29	1 50				
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26	Mr. H. A. ...	" 29	1 50				
26	Prof. ...	Vol 27	3 00				
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Figure 4. First four pages of the ledger for 1915 in Charles W. Johnson's longhand. Pages correspond to the initial batch of subscriptions for Volume 29. List of subscribers is a who's who of American and international malacology of the period. Included are, among others, John B. Henderson, Paul Bartsch, William F. Clapp, Calvin Goodrich, Edward S. Morse, M. M. Schepman, Don Carlos de la Torre, William H. Dall, Frank C. Baker, and Victor Sterki. Some institutions listed (e.g., Museum of Comparative Zoology, Carnegie Museum, and University of Chicago) have been loyal subscribers through the entire 20th Century and to the present day.

ties then were the preparation of the trend-setting and classic second edition of his American Seashells and the grand opening of the Hall of Shells at the Delaware Museum in May, 1972 (Harasewych, 1997).

Tucker made many changes in the appearance of the journal. The size changed from crown octavo to 26.5x20.5 cm. He added a gray protective cover (each number in the preceding 85 years started with a contents



Figure 5. Horace Burrington Baker, 1889–1971; editor 1958–1968. Photo *The Nautilus* archives.



Figure 7. Robert Tucker Abbott, 1919–1995; editor 1968–1985. Photo *The Nautilus* archives.



Figure 6. Charles B. Wurtz (1916–1982) at the AMU meeting at Haverford College in 1959. Photo from the American Malacological Society archives.

page of the same stock as the regular pages). An outline of a slightly stylized nautilus shell in cross-section became the logo (Figure 8), and the journal subtitle became “A quarterly devoted to malacology and the interests of conchologists”.

Another advance introduced in the same number was the addition of an editorial committee composed of 13 professionals representing a wide swath of American malacology. These were Arthur H. Clarke, Jr., William J. Clench, William K. Emerson, Morris K. Jacobson, Aurèle La Rocque, James H. McLean, Arthur S. Merrill, Donald R. Moore, Joseph Rosewater, G. Alan Solem, David H. Stansbery, Ruth D. Turner, and Gilbert L. Voss.

Last but not least, he shifted the publication of the first number of each volume from July to January beginning with volume 87 (1973): volumes now match calendar years.

Tucker’s tenure as editor-in-chief spanned 17 years, not counting his years as co-editor under H. B. Baker. Tucker left the Delaware Museum in 1978 and, in his own words, “moved *The Nautilus*, now under the jurisdiction of my American Malacologists, Inc., to Melbourne, Florida, where it has been published for the last six years [1979–1985, actually seven years]” (Abbott, 1986). In that period, Tucker’s wife Cecelia was the journal’s business manager.

THE HARASEWYCH YEARS

In 1984 Tucker invited Miroslav George (Jerry) Harasewych (born in 1949) (Figure 9), a former student

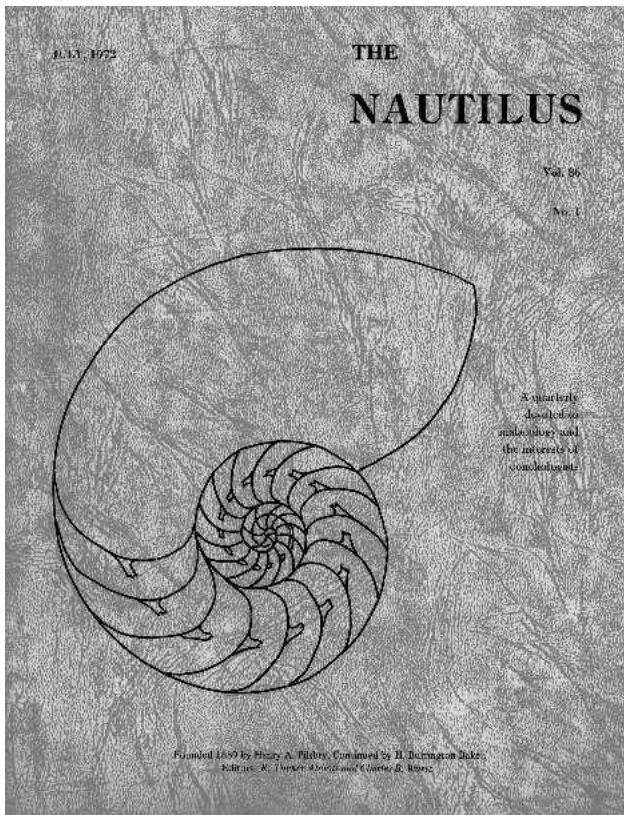


Figure 8. Cover with new design introduced by Robert Tucker Abbott in July, 1972.

and, at the time, a Research Fellow at the National Institute of Mental Health, to join the editorial staff of *The Nautilus* and to assist in various aspects of the production of the journal. Following the publication of volume 100 of *The Nautilus*, Abbott retired as editor, to be succeeded by Harasewych, then a newly appointed Curator of Marine Mollusca at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. During its first hundred volumes, *The Nautilus* was "owned" by the editor. To comply with the Smithsonian's requirement "to avoid the potential for an appearance of a conflict of interest," ownership of *The Nautilus* passed from American Malacologists to Trophon Corporation, a non-profit corporation established for the purpose during Harasewych's tenure as Editor.

Beginning with volume 101 (January 1987), Harasewych became editor-in-chief while Abbott continued as associate editor until his death in 1995. Harasewych again altered the format and contributed a new cover and logo, designed and illustrated by Hal Lewis Design, Inc., of Philadelphia; this is the design still in use today, including Lewis's beautiful line drawing of a live *Nautilus pompilius* on the cover, a nice improvement over the previous layout.

In addition, Jerry further added to the professional spin imparted by Tucker. He remarked (Harasewych, 1987) in the opening of volume 101: "*The Nautilus* will



Figure 9. M.G. (Jerry) Harasewych, born 1949; editor 1985–1998. Photo courtesy M.G. Harasewych.

continue to meet ever higher standards in the publication of papers on all aspects of the biology and systematics of mollusks." At that time I was second-year graduate student at the Rosenstiel School in Miami and wondered how hard it would be from then on to have a manuscript accepted by the journal.

THE PRESENT

Jerry was editor until the baton was passed to me in May, 1998 (volume 111, number 3), after a brief stint as managing editor from February, 1997 (volume 110, number 2), to February, 1998 (volume 111, number 2). Tina Yorgey was managing editor between March, 2001 (volume 115, number 1) and December, 2006 (volume 119, number 4).

With the acquisition of *The Nautilus* by The Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum in 1998, the journal became for the first time owned by an academic organization. Tucker's role as founding director of the museum until his death in November, 1995, was ultimately instrumental in the transfer of *The Nautilus* to the organization.

The Nautilus results from a cooperative effort between its staff, authors, reviewers, and subscribers. With your help and support of future generations, I am certain that the journal will thrive for at least another 120 years!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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