

An aerial photograph of Bern, Switzerland, showing a dense cluster of red-tiled roofs and white buildings. In the background, modern city buildings and construction cranes are visible against a blue sky with light clouds. A large clock tower with a green spire is prominent on the right side of the image.

AAPA

# MISCELLANY

A JOURNAL FOR MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN AMATEUR PRESS ASSOCIATION

#4 JUNE 2015

The Rooftops of Berne, Switzerland, 2013



AAPA Miscellany #4, June 2015

Edited and Produced by Clarence Wolfshohl

The individual authors and artists reserve all rights to their works published in *AAPA Miscellany*. This journal publishes the works of members of the American Amateur Press Association or those seeking membership in AAPA; however, it is not an official publication of AAPA, nor is AAPA responsible for any of the content in the journal.

Send all submissions to [wolfshohl@hotmail.com](mailto:wolfshohl@hotmail.com) by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.

### *Is the End Near?*

Perhaps you noticed that there was no *AAPA Miscellany* in May. Perhaps you didn't. The reason for not publishing a May issue was that there were no submissions. Actually, there were no submissions this month. I asked Dave Griffin, who has a great selection of stories at his website (<http://windsweptpress.com/stories.htm>), and he graciously let me choose one. The story is a quiet meditation on our place in nature.

I also asked Brian Warren, who does not belong to AAPA but does belong to a local writing group in Fulton, Missouri. He read the story at a recent meeting, and I liked its use of the unreliable narrator to satirize a particular type of consumer.

Kent Clair Chamberlain supplies me with his wonderful little poems regularly, giving me *carte blanche* with them. Some I print for him for the Bundle, which is still the primary venue for the voices of AAPA. Some I have used in the *Miscellany* as with these two.

Delores and Russell Miller sent the photo of Russell's Honor Flight group several months ago, requesting it be used in the June issue. I thought it would be a good fit for June 14, Flag Day, with its red, white, and blue display.

I added a few poems inspired by Brazil that I wrote after my chapbook *Season of Mangos* was published in 2009 by Adastra Press. They were too late for that collection of poems written after traveling to Belém in the state of Para in 2003 and 2006. However, they have been published by small press journals online.

Now, I could continue publishing *AAPA Miscellany* with no or few submissions as with this issue, but that was not the intention of the journal. This journal was intended to be an outlet for those who do not have other regular publishing venues. Those writers published herein can be and are regularly published online and in print elsewhere. Therefore, issue #4 of *Miscellany* may be the last. The future depends upon AAPA members submitting enough material to make the journal a varied and robust collection of expressions from our membership.

# Lights Out on the Sea

By David Griffin

I sat one early morning on the sand looking south over Casco Bay, waiting for the sunrise. The northeastern sky just off my shoulder seemed to lighten a bit as I noticed a single pinpoint of light speeding along the horizon. I could hear no sound, except for the waves crashing toward me, dissipating not far from my feet.

The light moved very fast, too fast for a boat. Even a small craft that close would be easily heard. Yet the light had a sense of being man-made, not other-worldly.

A few minutes later a similar sight appeared going just as fast, but this time there were two lights, one white and the other green, moving in tandem across the horizon.

As the sun found its way up from wherever it had spent the night, the sky lightened from a dark grey and made the world around me a little brighter. For the first time, I noticed seagulls standing like sentinels up and down the beach on either side of me, keeping their distance as they will from humans. More lights transited the horizon now and I could see the birds' heads following them. Like me, they seemed to find the apparitions of interest. Unlike me, they simply accepted them and didn't wonder about their origin.



I supposed the lights could have been ghosts, demons or extra-terrestrials, but I didn't think so. Neither did the birds. The gulls have stood there each morning for eons waiting for a morsel from the immeasurable abundance of the sea. A few goblins would never scare them away.

I was the only one standing on the beach that morning who could be frightened by my thoughts. I alone could conjure ghosts from my past or present or fearsome goblins from the future.

But not the birds. Theirs was a future they could not comprehend and a past they could not remember. The unknown lights out on the sea did not disturb their sense of the present. To them the present is reality. To me it could be a gift.

Taking a lesson from my companions, I opened my eyes and closed my mind and stood watching the sun come up, a simple witness to the daily miracle. I felt the wind wash over me and buoy me up, my burdens lifting as I came into the moment. I never determined the genesis of the lights out on the sea. For me, they had served their purpose, and they faded away with the presence of the new day.





# *Poems from Brazil*

*Belém. Pará, Brazil*

**Clarence Wolfshohl**

## **The Old Harbor of Belém**

The air above the old harbor of Belém  
is stringed like some huge harp  
from another cosmos, plaintiff melodies  
pitched so high the dogs on the wharves  
walk around with ears erect.

The gulls and buzzards slide  
among that rigging to search  
for morsels from the Ver o Peso  
tossed overboard or left on deck  
or railing unprotected.

Once, ships from Manchester  
unloaded iron houses, ballast  
used to cross the Atlantic,  
to free space for rubber  
from up the Amazon.

Up the street from the old harbor  
Paris fashions, cargo with the houses,  
have surrendered now to t-shirts  
and electronics in the stores'  
polished mahogany display cases.

The rubber from upriver purchased  
the Paris fashions for evenings  
at the opera, when buzzards, gulls,  
dogs, and Paraenses could hear  
music from distant cosmos.

## The Leaning Horse

In the background, a house  
leans away from the river  
as if it grips into the mud  
with all its might, the inhabitants,  
mother, father, children, pets,  
all pressed against the far  
wall to suspend their plunge.

Its cart tips to the left  
on rickety wheels, the açai  
dribbles onto the street  
when a truck rumbles away  
from the corner light.  
The horse leans into  
harness shafts, a cross-out  
through the runes of its ribs.

Its driver rests an elbow  
on a coconut juice stand  
as the vendor machetes  
the top of a green coconut  
with a slanting slice.  
He leans back against  
the counter and sips  
a long draught.

## Feira do Açai (Açai Market)

Tucked between 1616 fortress  
and docks of the old town  
is the feira do açai. The street  
is stained midnight purple  
by gathered heaps, swells,

of açai berries. People twist  
among them, young  
and old, rich and poor, casual  
shoppers and international buyers,  
runners among the shoals.

The Amazon sun sinks lava gold,  
and shadows grow as dark  
as the cobblestones of the market.  
Piles of berries are slicks  
of stillness on midnight sea.

In the morning blanch,

I will swirl this darkness,  
purple eddy among the white  
like a morning glory to scent  
my breakfast of tapioca and açai.

## Favela Kites

The Dutchman painted murals on the walls  
of the boy's house, the sky cerulean  
so that on days like today  
painted cannot be separated from real,

and the kites of all colors,  
of all shapes, playing out string  
along the horizon, riding currents  
into tall clouds, posed just before  
dip and dive to sever a rival's line.

Outside the painting  
the boys jostle each other  
and coax their kites hand over hand  
through the criss-crossing strings.

From down the street  
the boys of the favela  
seem suspended in the murals  
that soar upward with their kites.

## Belém Time

It always rains at two, they say.  
Two o'clock, Belém time,  
which may be three,  
give or take ten,  
fifteen minutes.

But when you are by the docks  
and the boys are diving  
into the waters of the Guajará  
and you are drinking Cerpinha  
or sipping coconut juice  
from the green fruit  
and a dark-haired girl  
is singing a displaced faro  
and it rains,  
it is a Belém good time.

*(Previously published: The Old Harbor of Belém in  
Green Hills Literary Lantern, the others in Houston  
Literary Review)*



# I Will Never, EVER Shop at Radio Shack Again!

Brian Warren

I visited the Radio Shack at the Westbridge Mall the other day and noticed they were having a big sale. I didn't really need anything, but can't resist a sale! All around were posted these very unRadio Shack like signs advertising discounts of 60% and 70% off everything in the store. I was picking through a display of motherboards when I saw the big display bin of Sheldon from *The Big Bang Theory* USB sticks. I was so excited, I let out an involuntarily snort.

The bin was full of brand new Sheldons. Usually action figures and bobble heads don't really look like the person, especially in the face, but these Sheldons looked just like Sheldon. But, then I remembered that I already had a Sheldon and had paid full price for it a couple of weeks ago and here it was now marked at 70% off. At first I was irritated, but then got an idea. I realized I could return the Sheldon I already had at full price and buy it back at the discounted price. I'd save so much I could probably pick up another two or three additional Sheldons for the price I paid for the one I was now going to return.

I had to wait like fifteen minutes in the checkout line where people were standing with arms full of assorted items: RC cars, computer cables, batteries, electronic fart noisemakers. I presented my receipt; I always carry my receipts with me at least three weeks after making a purchase (something my grandpa taught me). "I'd like to return this Sheldon themed USB stick please."

The cashier was a skinny hipster type with thickly rimmed glasses and splash of purple in his otherwise jet black hair. His name badge read 'Anton.'

"What's the problem with the item?" he asked.

I was very polite and said; "Anton, as you can see, I bought this Sheldon a couple of weeks ago, and now" pointing to the display, "you're selling it for 70% off. I want to return this one and buy one of those on sale".

He said he couldn't do that. So, I asked what that meant. "Was there a problem with my receipt?"

He said, no, my receipt was fine.

"Well then?" I asked.

"Sir, we're going out of business," was his reply.

I stared into his eyes for a moment before replying, "I don't see what your going out of business has to do with my returning this Sheldon. I'm following your return policy to the letter."

"I understand that. As I said, there appears to be no problem with your receipt. I'm simply telling you that in light of our going out of business, we're not taking returns."

"Well that hardly seems fair," I announced, barely suppressing my annoyance. "Anyone else buying this very same Sheldon today will get it for 70% less than I paid not more than fourteen days ago."

"Sir, we're going out of business," he repeated.

"Yes, I heard you!"

Then I had an idea – I asked what if I pick out three or four other items for an exchange? If the items I choose to exchange for this one ring up at more than what I paid for this item, I'd pay the difference. I thought that was a really fair compromise.



Once again, he repeated, "Sir, we're going out of business." And his tone was so rude.

"Stop saying that", I nearly shouted. Lowering my voice and finding my composure, I went on, "I've heard you say you're going out of business, but I don't see what that has to do with my returning this Sheldon."

Then he went on this diatribe, saying, "You've been coming in here for years, buying and subsequently returning things. Our store has always had a pretty liberal return policy and you've taken advantage of that policy. You buy something, use it and then return it a couple of weeks later. Usually, the items you return are in perfect shape, but occasionally you return an item without the original packaging and we've always taken your returns."

Then I said, "Yes, and because you've always treated me well, I've remained a loyal customer. What ever happened to the 'customer is always right?' Am I going to have to find a new electronics store?" I threatened.

"Yes you are, because we're going out of business!" Anton replied, raising his voice.

Doing my best to retain my composure, I closed my eyes and took a deep breath. "Listen, Anton, I've heard you, but I still don't understand why you won't take this Sheldon

back, or at least let me exchange it for a few others."

"Sir, we're g..." he began.

"Don't say it", I interrupted.

Then he really made me mad by lecturing me with something like "Sir, our return policy and the 'customer is always right' premise both assume the store remains in business. What is the point of trying to make you happy even if we lose a little money in the process in the hopes that you'll remain a loyal customer if we're going out of business?"

Then he motioned over my shoulder to the person waiting in line behind me. I gripped the counter to hold my place "I want to speak to a manager," I said in as calm a voice as I could muster.

"I'm in charge today."

"Who is your boss", I asked.

"Our manager was laid off. He's not here."

"To whom do you report?"

"I report to a district manager, who's also been laid off. In three days, I'll be laid off too. Everyone here will be laid off. The store will be closed for good on Thursday."

What a jerk! No wonder Radio Shack is going out of business!

## *Poems by Kent Clair Chamberlain*

### **Thanks for Being!**

I will write  
Birds taking  
Flight. Words to  
Heal. Prayers  
Made  
Real.

Bless god!

### **Coffee Nocturne**

Raise cups, night,  
Grin! Beam,  
Sunrise!

# *The Miller's Album*

Delores & Russell Miller



## Old Glory Honor Flight to Washington, D. C.

October 9, 2014, Russ along with 70 other veterans from the Second World War and Korean Conflict on the Old Glory Honor Flight to Washington, D. C. Taken in front of the World War Two memorial. Russ is in the back row, about in the middle.