

# St. Pauli News in Detail



## ANNUAL MEETINGS

January 30, 2022



**ST. PAULI CONGREGATION**  
11:30 am

**ST. PAULI CEMETERY ASS'N**  
12:30 pm

**IMPORTANT:** Designated persons must submit their organizational reports to Virginia Anderson no later than January 17<sup>th</sup> for inclusion in the St. Pauli Annual Report. The booklets will be available to voting members by Sunday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>.

We have planned for a potluck meal following the annual meetings, but will monitor Covid restrictions and alter accordingly.

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## Greeting and Ushering



Jan. 2	Myles Alberg
Jan. 9	Ron Anderson
Jan. 16	Faye Auchenpaugh
Jan. 23	Wade Benson
Jan. 30	Corey Berg

**Altar Preparation:** Barb Nelson



## St. Pauli Handbook

The 2022 handbooks are now in your mailboxes. We have planned events and activities on the basis that we can have fellowship in person, but any of these will be modified as needed to comply with any Covid concerns or restrictions.

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## January Milestones

### Birthdays

Jan. 13	Noah Haugen
Jan. 17	Erin Rondorf

### Anniversaries

Jan. 3	Jim and Jan Strandlie
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## Note from Carolyn Swanson

Greetings and God's Blessings.

My girls and I enjoyed our visit to St. Pauli last summer. We would have also liked to have been able to attend the anniversary this past summer, but I sold my home and it was just at that time that I needed to be moved out – Not a fun thing to do! I am now living on the farm where I grew up in Twig, MN.

Thank you for mailing our cookbooks. I've found it very useful and it brings back good memories of our life in your area! Thanks, Faye, for keeping people like us updated about St. Pauli.

Love from Carolyn S. (Pastor Swanson's widow)

New contact information: Carolyn Swanson, 7249 Industrial Rd, Saginaw, MN 55779. Phone: 218-341-5193. Email: swansoncarolyn8@gmail.com

# This Christmas, hope may feel elusive. But despair is not the answer.



By Michael Gerson, *Washington Post*  
December 23, 2021

Many in our country have lost the simple confidence that better days are ahead, for a variety of understandable reasons. There are the coronavirus's false dawns, followed by new fears. There are rising prices and empty store shelves, as if in Soviet Romania. There is Afghanistan, descending into man-made catastrophe. There are increases in urban violence. And deeply embedded racial injustice. And an environment buckling under terrible strains. Everything seems crying out in chaotic chorus: "Things are not getting better."

That spirit possesses our politics. The right sees a country in cultural decline, stripped of its identity and values. The left fears we are moving toward a new American authoritarianism. Both are ideologies of prophesied loss. In a society, such resentments easily become septic. So many otherwise irenic (aiming or aimed at peace) people seem captured by the politics of the clenched fist. A portion seem to genuinely wish some of their neighbors' humiliation and harm.

Under such circumstances, it can feel impossible to sustain hope. Yet from a young age, if we are lucky, we are taught that hope itself sustains. It is one of the most foundational assurances of childhood for a parent to bend down and tell a crying child: *It is okay. It will be all better.* We have an early, instinctual desire to know that trials are temporary, that wounds will heal and all will be well in the end. When a child abuser violates such a promise, it is the cruelest possible betrayal. When young people and adults lose confidence in the possibility of a better day, it can result in the diseases and ravages of despair: drug addiction leading to overdose, alcoholism leading to liver failure, depression leading to suicide.

A columnist living through an appropriate column illustration should probably disclose it. I have been dealing with cancer for a long time. For most of that period, the cancer was trying to kill me without my feeling it. It was internal and theoretical. Now I have reached a different and unpleasant phase, in which the cancer is trying to kill me and making me feel it — the phase when life plans become unknitted and the people you love watch you be weak.

I am not near death and don't plan to be soon. But there is a time in the progress of a disease such as mine when you believe that you will recover, that you will get better. And I have passed the point when that hope is credible. Now, God or fate has spoken. And the words clank down like iron gates: No, it will not be okay. You will not be getting better.

Such reflections flow naturally when you are writing from the antiseptic wonderland of the holiday hospital ward. But nearly every life eventually involves such tests of hope. Some questions, even when not urgent, are universal: How can we make sense of blind and stupid suffering? How do we live with purpose amid events that scream of unfair randomness? What sustains hope when there is scant reason for it?

The context of the Nativity story is misunderstood hope. The prophets and Jewish people waited for centuries in defiant expectation for the Messiah to deliver Israel from exile and enemies. This was essentially the embodied belief that something different and better was possible — that some momentous divine intervention could change everything.

But the long-expected event arrived in an entirely unexpected form. Not as the triumph of politics and power, but in shocking humility and vulnerability. The world's desire in a puking infant. Angelic choirs performing for people of no social account. A glimpse of glory along with the smell of animal dung. Clearly, we are being invited by this holy plot twist to suspend our disbelief for a moment and consider some revolutionary revision of spiritual truth.

Or at least this is what the story says, which we try to interpret beneath limited, even conflicting texts. No matter how we react to the historicity of each element, however, the Nativity presents the inner reality of God's arrival.

He is a God who goes to ridiculous lengths to seek us.

He is a God who chose the low way: power in humility; strength perfected in weakness; the last shall be first; blessed are the least of these.

He is a God who was cloaked in blood and bone and destined for human suffering — which he does not try to explain to us, but rather just shares. It is perhaps the hardest to fathom: the astounding vulnerability of God.

And he is a God of hope, who offers a different kind of security than the fulfillment of our deepest wishes. He promises a transformation of the heart in which we release the burden of our desires, and live in expectation of God's unfolding purposes, until all his mercies stand revealed.

There is an almost infinite number of ways other than angelic choirs that God announces his arrival. I have friends who have experienced a lightning strike of undeniable mission, or who see God in the deep beauty of nature or know Jesus in serving the dispossessed.

For me, such assurances do not come easy or often. Mine are less grand vistas than brief glimpses behind a curtain. In Sylvia Plath's poem "Black Rook in Rainy Weather," she wrote of an "incandescent" light that can possess "the most obtuse objects" and "grant / A brief respite from fear." Plath concluded: "Miracles occur, / If you care to call those spasmodic / Tricks of radiance miracles. The wait's begun again, / The long wait for the angel. / For that rare, random descent."

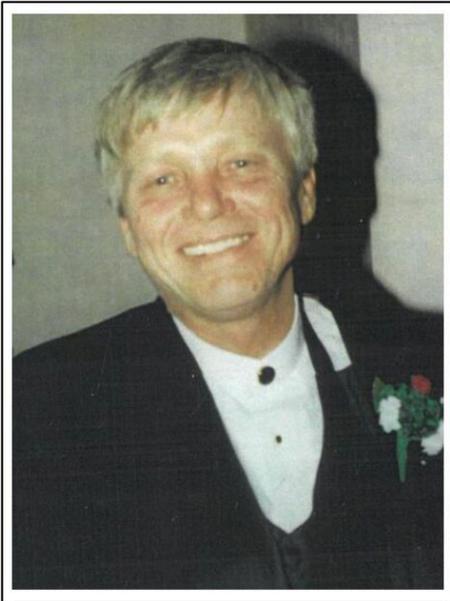
Christmas hope may well fall in the psychological category of wish fulfillment. But that does not disprove the possibility of actually-fulfilled wishes. On Christmas, we consider the disorienting, vivid evidence that hope wins. If true, it is a story that can reorient every human story. It means that God is with us, even in suffering. It is the assurance, as from a parent, as from an angel, as from a savior: It is okay. And even at the extreme of death (quoting Julian of Norwich): "All shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well."

# In Memoriam

## Ronald Alberg

**November 07, 1951 – December 2, 2021**

*Ronald Alberg is the brother of Myles (Kathy) Alberg, the son of Stanley and Theresa Alberg, and the grandson of Carl and Louise Alberg.*



Ronald Stuart Alberg (Ron or Ronny) was born November 7, 1951, to Stanley and Theresa (Hammer) Alberg. He grew up on the family farm in Roseau, MN, in a household full of love, laughter, and hard work.

At 18, he joined the army and fought for his country in Vietnam. After his honorable discharge, he began working at the Regional Treatment Center in Fergus Falls, MN. He would go on to spend the next 30 years there changing and touching the lives of numerous people through his unique ability to see people for who they are, his wicked sense of humor, and his unruffled

demeanor. The Regional Treatment Center was a unique environment. Those who worked there forged bonds and remained friends with each other for the entirety of their lives.

It was also here that he met the love of his life, Mary (Horstmann) Alberg. They married on September 20, 1976 and would enjoy 45 years together. Through this union he was immediately blessed with a son and daughter. In 1977 and 1980, they welcomed two additional daughters. Ron's family was the most important thing to him. He proved that by committing his life to sobriety. He was an active member of AA and would go on to spend the next 41 years sober, something he and his family took much pride in.

Ron loved everything about the outdoors and devoting time to hunting, fishing and trapping. Family camping trips became the source of many precious and comical memories. Stuffing a family of six into an old station wagon and driving across the country to sleep in a tent, at times, ended in disasters never to be forgotten.

Later in life, he developed a passion for politics and enjoyed participating in lively debates. He surprised us by developing an interest in art and painting. Additionally, his love of building led him to a hobby assembling intricate wooden models. However, the source of his greatest pride and joy was his grandkids. He never passed up an opportunity to spend time with them and make memories.

Ron and Mary's life is a true love story and an inspiration to us all.

Ron is survived by his wife Mary Alberg, a son Mike (Ellen) Alberg, a daughter Tina (Pat) Van Eps, a daughter Chance (Eric) Alberg, a daughter Rebecca (Josh) Lacheur; siblings Myles (Kathy) Alberg, Debbie (Bert) Erickson, Kim Berg; grandchildren Ben and Danielle Alberg, Cyan, Aspen and Brea Klemmer, Kai, Sol and Nove Lacheur and Jakoby Van Eps, 2 great grandchildren Jaymes and Emmett; and numerous cousins, nieces and nephews.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Stanley and Theresa Alberg, a brother Chad Alberg, a brother David Alberg, and a brother-in-law, Curtis Berg.



*When someone you love becomes a memory...  
That memory becomes a treasure.*

# Minutes of the Church Council

November 18, 2021

The St. Pauli Church Council met on November 18, 2021 at 7 PM at the church with the following members present: Virginia Anderson, Craig Folkedahl, Pastor Carl Hansen, Tammy Haugen and Jim Strandlie. Member absent: Wade Benson.

The meeting was called to order by President Craig Folkedahl. Pastor Carl Hansen opened with prayer.

Agenda: Remained as presented.

Secretary's Report: M/S/C (Haugen, Strandlie) to approve October Secretary's report.

Treasurer's Report: M/S/C (Haugen, Hansen) to approve the Treasurer's report for October as presented.

## St. Pauli Treasurer's Monthly Report October 2021

Checking Account Balance End of Sep 2021	\$14,814.79
Oct 2021 Revenue:	\$2,720.00
Oct 2021 Expenses:	(\$1,429.18)
Checking Account Balance End of Oct 2021:	\$16,105.61
Other Account Balances End of Oct 2021:	
Education Fund	\$1,101.03
Edward Jones	\$77,513.84
Memorial Fund	\$14,878.09
Mission Grant	\$4,436.61
Savings	\$36,606.07
<b>Total St. Pauli Account Balances End of Oct 2021</b>	<b>\$150,641.25</b>

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**Cemetery Ass'n Funds End of Oct 2021: \$62,185.69**

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Pastor's Report: Pastor Carl reminded the council that he will be gone December 25<sup>th</sup> through January 11<sup>th</sup>. Pastor Gary Graff from Red Lake Falls will be filling in on January 9, 2022.

Pastor stated that he is due to complete continuing education that is required for pastors. It will be done in the near future at the cost of \$100. Motion was made to approve the cost of the fee to be paid by the church. M/S/C (Haugen, Folkedahl)

Report of members in sickness or distress: Concerns and prayers were said for those experiencing illness or distress.

New members or interest in membership: Tammy Haugen said she has approached two different couples about possible interest in attending St. Pauli Lutheran.

### Reports:

a. WELCA - Virginia and Ron Anderson delivered 15 boxes of quilts and kits to the semi-truck on November 6<sup>th</sup> in Thief River Falls to be taken to the LWR center in Minneapolis. The semi was already half full as the pick-up date for Roseau and surrounding area was the day before, Friday November 5<sup>th</sup>. It continues to be a very welcome service provided with no charge by Hartz Trucking in Thief River Falls.

- b. Plans have been made for the Christmas Tea on December 5<sup>th</sup> from 3-5 pm at the Country School at Faye's. Reservations are required.
- c. Board of Education – N/A
- d. Other reports – N/A

Old Business: Damaged tree at the cemetery has been cut down by REA. Several church members did the trimming of branches and sawing into chunks as much as could be accomplished while the mild weather continued. Also, some black dirt was filled into grass area where needed. There was no damage to gravestones or any surrounding markers as REA did a competent job in cutting the tree. More work will need to be done for removal of the remaining wood. Virginia will contact the tree service in Thief River Falls for grinding the remaining large stump in the spring.

Kari Torkelson has agreed to fill in for church service on Sunday, January 2<sup>nd</sup> in Pastor Carl's absence. Thanks go to Kari for always being willing to help us out in this way.

Tammy Haugen reported that Century Link was contacted in regard to the church telephone not working and the problem was taken care of with the phone working again.

Greg Radniecki Carpet Cleaning was contacted about cleaning the church carpets, he came out and looked the situation over and will give us an estimate. He said the area around the altar was in such good shape, he suggested not cleaning there.

New Business: Virginia Anderson brought up the idea of a Christmas tree for the church being Advent begins on November 28<sup>th</sup>. The Anderson's will check on obtaining a tree but will not be able to have it up by that date.

Fella and Loretta Drevlow would like to host a renewing of vows for their relatives, Brian and Carmine Trulson on the occasion of their 40<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary on November 28<sup>th</sup>. The Trulsons were married at St. Pauli Church. The council approved the use of the church for the occasion. A \$100 fee will be charged for the use of the church and all rules of the church and grounds will be followed. Brian Trulson and his sister lived with the Orville Rolandson family years ago and would have attended St. Pauli over the years. The council considered it a unique situation that they would come back and celebrate at our church.

Due to the fact that Jim Strandlie was absent from the last council and Cemetery Association meeting, he presented the proposal of the cemetery tree project for spring 2022 and clarified some questions that had arisen since introducing the project. After more discussion, the project was approved so that selection of trees could be placed on order with the USDA in Thief River Falls. The project will also be addressed at our annual meeting the end of January. M/S/C (Haugen, Folkedahl)

Lord's Prayer was prayed. Council meeting adjourned by President Craig.

Virginia Anderson, St. Pauli Church Council Secretary

# Gas Stations and the White Patrol

It was 1885 in Fort Wayne, Indiana where kerosene pump inventor, S.F. Bowser sold his first, newly invented kerosene pump to the owner of a grocery shop. This was to solve the problem and mess of a storekeeper lading flammable liquid into whatever random container the customer brought. At that time, kerosene would fuel stoves and lamps. Gasoline was just a volatile byproduct of refining kerosene.



Bowser Kerosene Pump

Bicycle mechanics J. Frank and Charles Duryea of Springfield, Massachusetts, had designed the first successful American gasoline automobile in 1893 and then won the first American car race in 1895. The race, sponsored by the *Chicago Times-Herald*, was intended to drum up publicity for the nascent American car industry. It worked, especially for the Duryeas: In the year after the *Times-Herald* race, the brothers sold 13 of their eponymous Motor Wagons, more than any other carmaker in America.

In 1899, thirty American manufacturers produced 2,500 motor vehicles, and some 485 companies entered the business in the next decade. In 1908 Henry Ford introduced the Model T and William Durant founded General Motors.

The new firms operated in an unprecedented seller's market for an expensive consumer goods item. With its vast land area and a hinterland of scattered and isolated settlements, the United States had a far greater need for automotive transportation than the nations of Europe. Great demand was ensured, too, by a significantly higher per capita income and more equitable income distribution than European countries.

In the early years of motoring, before dedicated gasoline stations existed, motorists bought gasoline from hardware stores, general stores, pharmacies, and even blacksmiths. These businesses had pre-existing relationships with the refineries through their sale of kerosene, used for stoves and as a lighting fuel. Stored in five-gallon cans stacked curbside or in large above-ground tanks, the fuel was poured into the automobile's gas tank using a funnel with a chamois as a filter.

With the advent of gasoline-powered motor vehicles, Bowser's invention, which reliably measured and dispensed kerosene – a product in high demand for nearly 50 years – soon evolved into the metered gasoline pump. The original Bowser pump was utilitarian looking, made up of a square metal tank with a wooden cabinet equipped with a suction pump operated by a manual hand-stroke lever.



Bowser Chief Sentry Gas Pump

In 1905, a hose attachment was added for putting gasoline directly into the fuel tank.

After a series of fires and explosions,

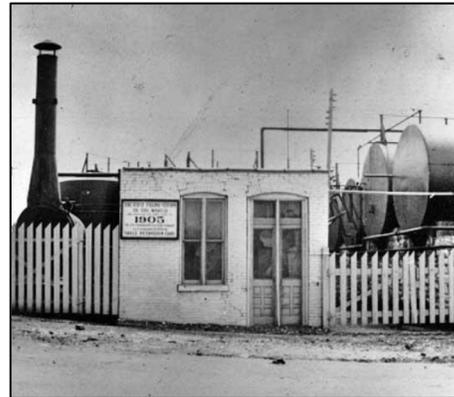
public concern and regulators forced the sale of gasoline to

dedicated retail facilities outside of city centers—creating a new type of business called the “filling station.” Both the filling station and the gas pump would evolve into what we now know as the modern gas station.

Several locations around the United States claim to be the site of the nation's (possibly even the world's) first filling stations. According to the 1994 book “The Gas Station in

America” by John Jakle and Keith Sculle, “Where and when the first gasoline station appeared is difficult to establish since various types of ‘stations’ appeared on the American scene between 1907 and 1913.”

A few historical firsts have been identified:



1905 – The first dedicated gas station is established in St. Louis, MO at 420 South Theresa Avenue.



1907 – First service station is installed by Standard Oil of California (now Chevron) in Seattle, WA.



1909 – The oldest existing and continuously operated gas station in the U.S. is Reighard's Gas Station in Altoona, PA.

By 1918, the first visible gas pump was introduced. The customer was able to see just how much fuel he had purchased by the inclusion of a large glass cylinder that was hooked up to the pump. When first introduced, the glass cylinders were retrofitted to curbside pumps that already existed. In 1923 companies started to develop new pumps with the cylinders attached directly to them. This was also the early foray into experimenting with motorized pumping mechanisms versus the manual hand crank. Around 1925, the visible cylinder was replaced by the clock-style meter, which was a dominant feature of early 1930s gas pumps.

1934 was the year that the computer meter was developed by the Wayne Pump Company. With this invention, the traditional clock-face style was replaced by a more digital form. Gallons and prices were displayed directly on the face and this caught on quickly. By the late 30's, all companies used the computer meter. This was the beginning of the Art Deco period as well, which embraced the machine aesthetic. Gas pumps in this era were geometric in shape and featured stepped and vibrant patterns with stainless steel. Although the edges were slightly rounded, the overall pump was squarer in its look. This style was dominant throughout the WWII years, as the government limited their manufacturing.

Once the Second World War ended, cars got lower and it became difficult to view meters from the car's new lower perspective. As a result, new, shorter gasoline pumps were designed, which were called low-profile pumps. For the most part, these pumps featured rounded edges, stainless steel trim, large meter faces, and simpler details than what was seen in the Art Deco designs of the 1930s.

In the 1950's the trend continued to move away from rounder edges, and the stainless steel pump was popular. The hardware was shorter, squarer in shape, and featured unpainted, stainless steel surfaces. The top part of the pump was often larger, sitting atop a narrower, tapering base. The units were often set up adjacent to one another in long rows, providing different types of fuels and services.

Today, 152,995 gas stations dot the landscape, including 123,289 convenience stores. On average, each location sells about 4,000 gallons of fuel per day.

Now we get to another interesting bit of history...

At one time or another, just about everyone has used the bathroom in a one-stop, auto plaza or a stand-alone gas station. Some bathrooms have standards of cleanliness posted and others are so filthy that one would not go past the door. Seventy years ago, the average gas station bathroom was such a breeding ground for disease that it was used only by the desperate.

Early highway travelers had their work cut out for them when seeking any of the amenities we take for granted today. The first gas filling stations rarely had buildings, much less any type of facilities to offer customers.

The Gulf Refining Company was the first to begin building attractive filling stations. In 1913, these new designs blended with residential properties, often looking like small cottages—but they did not offer more to customers than gasoline and motor oil.

Texaco realized the need to provide facilities for travelers, and new stations built after 1918 included separate restrooms for ladies and gentlemen. While modern, restroom entrances

were located along the exterior of the building, often with the men's room on the opposite side of the ladies' room.

As more and more women and girls were starting to drive cars, the gas companies finally caught up and started to compete with one another for female customers—and what better way to lure them into the stations than offering them a clean bathroom?

Texaco, and then Phillips 66, certified bathrooms at stations that met company expectations and then allowed those stations to advertise "clean bathrooms."

As other oil companies followed suit to stay ahead of the competition, Texaco began advertising "Registered Restrooms" and hiring a staff of "White Patrol" inspectors that traveled from town to town to ensure that all Texaco stations offered facilities that met the guidelines of sanitation promoted by their corporation in 1938.

A year later Phillips 66 hired registered nurses who went to "restroom cleaning school" before going out onto the highways to ensure that restrooms would be as clean as hospitals. Called "Highway Hostesses," the nurses made random visits to gas stations, inspecting the restroom facilities, ensuring they were stocked with supplies, and giving advice on how to make the facility more appealing to customers.

Texaco and Phillips were well aware that most women knew



little about gas, but that they did know clean bathrooms, and clean bathrooms translated into money.

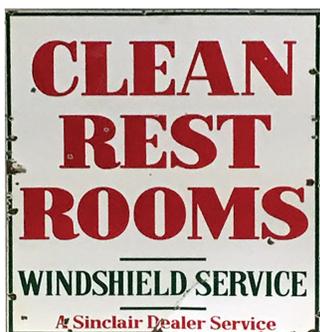
The Highway Hostesses were a big hit and also provided support and help to motorists, spreading goodwill for the company by helping motorists identify suitable dining and lodging. Phillips 66 was proud of these inspectors who went beyond cleaning to provide help to motorists in difficult circumstances.

One hostess even saved a child from drowning.

Union 76 employed similar hostesses, called the “Sparkle Corps” (note the sashes). Shell Oil advertised that their restrooms met the “White Cross of Cleanliness.”



While Sinclair Oil Co. did not advertise a White Patrol or White Cross of Cleanliness, this sign would have advertised the availability of clean restrooms at the station's entrance, along with Windshield Service—ensuring travelers had a clean windshield, correct oil levels, and a full tank of



gas until the next stop miles down the road.

Though World War II ended the program, Texaco brought it back and was joined by Union Oil Co.

It is not certain how many gas stations became certified, but bathrooms began to be cleaned daily. The woman's bathroom would often have a little table with flowers on it. Seventy years ago, air fresheners, as we know them now, did not exist. The mark of a germ-free bathroom was Lysol, the smell of which erased fear of disease.

For decades, the restrooms would be available to anyone during regular filling station hours, but by the late 1960's most required that users would have to enter the station office and request a key because the restrooms were “Locked For Your Protection.”

Below is a photo of the Texaco station in Algoma, WI (near Green Bay). Matt Strutz built the station, best remembered as Seilers, and when it opened on May 4, 1929, it was an impressive three-pump station.

Texaco's Fire Chief and Sky Chief grades of gas are apparent on the gas pumps in the photo, although most said, “Fill 'er up with regular.” Drivers always pulled to the air hose on the left to have their tires checked and then filled without charge.

The Coke cooler left of the door was popular, especially in summer. The amount of Coke sold is evident in the wooden cases piled around the corner to the left. According to the sign on the car, Kelly tires were for sale and one only needed to call 255 for service. It was a time when phone calls went through an operator.

Such full-service stations have mostly faded into the past, however a trip through sparsely populated areas often provides a trip down memory lane. Some buildings are on the Historic Register and may now be hair salons or craft stores.



# Why are Books That Shape? From Codices to Kindles, Why This Rectangle Stays Golden

By Danika Ellis, Sep 6, 2019

Anyone who has ever tried to organize their bookshelves can tell you that books are not a standard size. In fact, even books that fall under the same category (mass market paperbacks, trade paperbacks, hardcovers) can vary wildly. It makes a perfectly matched shelf very difficult.



Despite all of those different sizes, though, almost all books have a certain proportion. From books that could hang off your keychain to dictionaries you can hardly lift, they are almost always rectangles taller than they are wide, at around the same proportions (width:height of about 5:8). And this isn't a new invention of mass printing: according to "The Book" by Keith Houston, the oldest books in the world have about the same proportions, though they were often slightly taller than our books now.

Why is that? Although triangular books are pretty silly, why isn't it more common to have square books? Or long rectangles? Why does this particular rectangle set the standard? It turns out that there are a lot of forces converging to make this shape ideal, and to get the whole picture, we'll have to look from three angles: the anatomy of a reader, the history of publishing, and—in a brief departure from the world of books—the magic numbers behind printing.

## **Anatomy of a Reader**

The first factor in deciding the size of the book is looking at the user of this object, which—as far as I can tell—is 100% humans. We read by flicking our eyes back and forth over the text ("saccading"), and our eyes can only handle a certain length of line: too long and they get lost on the way back to the next line; too short, and we waste a lot of time and distract ourselves by flicking between lines too quickly. In *The Elements of Typographic Style* by Robert Bringhurst, he sets this limit at 45–75 characters per line, with 66 being ideal. This is the same reason that wider publications, like newspapers and magazines, set text into columns, although they have their own standards of what a perfect line length is.

The other crucial piece of human anatomy that comes into play while reading is our hands. The proportions of a book look pretty similar to that of our hands, which makes sense because they should fit together. While the first books being bound were usual put on pedestals to be read, books now are meant to be held, which means they should be optimized to that shape—which may also explain how books have gotten shorter since their first incarnations.



## **The History of Publishing**

Speaking of early books, to really understand how books

became the shape they are, we have to delve into the history of publishing. Before books, there were scrolls, and although many of these scrolls read from top to bottom continuously (most Greek scrolls), some read from left to right in columns (most Egyptian scrolls). By folding between these columns and stitching them together on one edge, the first codices were created, which were the precursor to the modern book.

These early codices of course relied on the original scrolls to determine their size. *Typology of the Early Codex* by Eric Turner analyzed 892 books made between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries, and found that their sizes were mostly dictated by the height of their original scroll and the codex creators' "dislike for the overlapping joints between the pasted-together sheets of the scrolls."

These codices were beginning to look like books, and they were already around the right shape, but they still weren't what we'd think of as an average book. *A History of Book Illustration* by David Bland notes that the original 1<sup>st</sup> century codices were in columns, usually 4 of them, but by the 4<sup>th</sup> century, each page was only 2 columns, and sometimes just one.

There were practical considerations for the size of each page. Books were rarely wider than they were tall, because that would put too much strain on the spine. Another possible consideration was in the size of the vats where the original paper was made, before it was folded into pages, and which couldn't exceed the arm span of the vatman.

Although I stick by books being designed around human being's anatomy, there are actually a few other species that played their part. In the switch from papyrus to parchment, this meant using goat, cow, and sheep skins, which—when trimmed of their curves—are rectangular. They also fold easily into four folio quires, which are neatly arranged with flesh against flesh and hair sides facing each other. Book sizes at this time were usually referred to by the number of times the original paper was folded, though because those original pieces of paper varied, this didn't tell you much about the actual size of the volume. (In 1398, Bologna, Italy, had a carved stone with the standard page sizes displayed. This very academic website refers to the "Bologna stone" with a straight face, which I cannot handle.)

Most books published before 1500 were "quartos" or "folios," which means they were very large books. They were a luxury item, and weren't meant to be portable. Houston describes how Manutius began to print "handbooks" or "portable books" in 1501, pioneering and popularizing the "octavo" that we still use today. (He also cut out the overwhelming amount of publisher and editor commentary, and invented italics!) By that time, books looked pretty similar to what we have now. Not just the right general proportions, but also the handheld size that we have come to expect.

It's not just anatomy and history, though. There's one more class we have to take to understand the "golden" rectangle that is the book: math class.

## The Magic Numbers of Books

I will freely admit: I am not a numbers person. In fact, when researching this post, it took me totally off guard to realize that there was a mathematical answer to why books are shaped that way. If you want a deeper introduction to this topic, swing by Wikipedia's "Canons of page construction."

Here's the short answer, though: there are some proportions that are either mathematically practical for a page to be, or are considered the perfect proportions aesthetically. In *Divina Proporción Tipográfica* ("Typographical Divine Proportion"), Raúl Rosarivo took a drafting compass to Renaissance-era books and concluded that they followed a "golden canon of page construction." This "golden number," or "secret number," was 2:3. This also served to divide the pages into ninths, which made margins easy to fix—though the margin on the bottom is wider than the one on the top. This can be argued as a plus, though, because this allows a book to be held from the bottom without obscuring the text (*Paul Renner: The Art of Typography* by Christopher Burke).

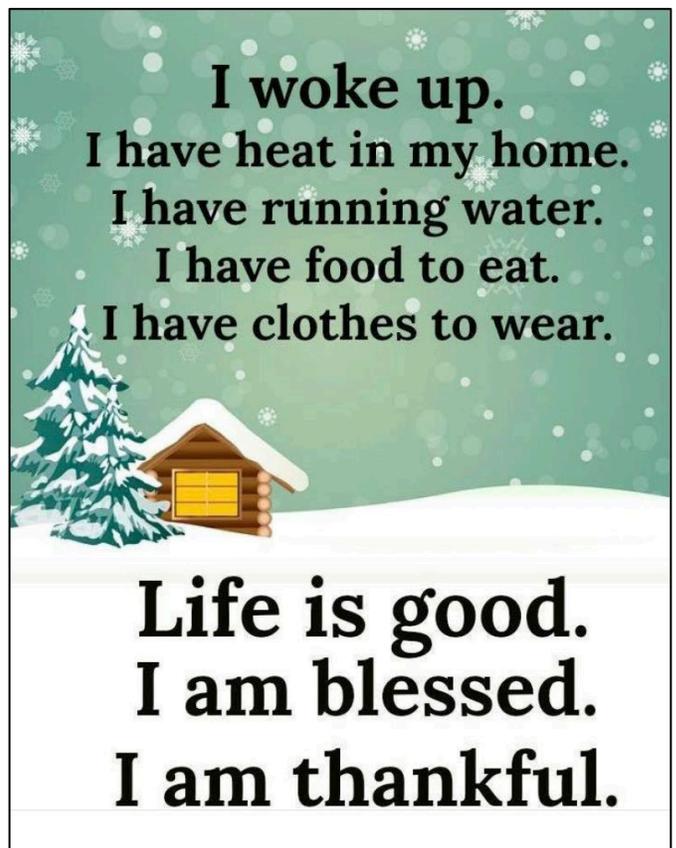
This isn't the only "golden" math happening, though. While Rosarivo's golden number is 1.5, the golden ratio is about 1.618, and it also surfaces in book design, from the Gutenberg bible to British Penguin paperbacks (Houston). The golden ratio is not just used in book construction, though: it's observable in nature and is used in art, architecture, and even music.

Personally, though, I am less of a fan of these "golden" proportions and instead embrace the Pythagorean Constant. This is the square root of 2\*, and when used in printing, it means that a page can be folded in half infinitely without losing its proportion (*Institut d'Histoire du Livre*). Considering that books are made by folding a larger piece of paper and then binding the edges, this seems like good reasoning to me. This is the proportion that goes into A sizes of paper, which are the standard sizes of printer paper in most of the world, other than the U.S. and Canada (Houston). I can now tell you that I have opinions about the standard sizes of printer paper in the U.S. and Canada, which is a new development.

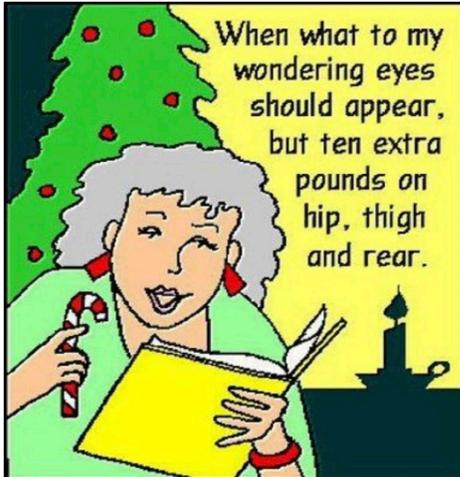
And that wraps it up for what makes books the size they are! As for Kindles, their proportions range depending on the model, but the Kindle 2 was almost exactly Rosarivo's "golden number," and the current Kindle Paperwhite is just barely over Pythagorean's Constant. Books (and ereaders) continue to shift around in size slightly, but between the anatomy of their readers, the realities of printing, and the aesthetic and practical consideration of the math involved, these rectangles are here to stay.

### Works Referenced:

- *A History of Book Illustration* by David Bland
- *The Elements of Typographic Style* by Robert Bringhurst
- *Paul Renner: The Art of Typography* by Christopher Burke
- *The Book* by Keith Houston
- *Divina Proporción Tipográfica* by Raúl Rosarivo
- *Typology of the Early Codes* by Eric Turner



# The Back Page



## 'Twas the Month After Christmas

'Twas the month after Christmas, and all through the house  
Nothing would fit me, not even a blouse.  
The cookies I'd nibble, the eggnog I'd taste  
All the holiday parties had gone to my waist.

When I got on the scales there arose such a number!  
When I walked to the store (less a walk than a lumber),  
I'd remember the marvelous meals I'd prepared,  
The gravies and sauces and beef nicely rared,  
The wine and the rum balls, the bread and the cheese,  
And the way I'd never said, "No, thank you, please."

As I dressed myself in my husband's old shirt  
And prepared once again to do battle with dirt—  
I said to myself, as I only can,  
"You can't spend a winter disguised as a man!"

So, away with the last of the sour cream dip,  
Get rid of the fruit cake, every cracker and chip.  
Every last bit of food that I like must be banished  
'Til all the additional ounces have vanished.

I won't have a cookie, not even a lick.  
I'll want only to chew on a long celery stick.  
I won't have hot biscuits, or corn bread, or pie.  
I'll munch on a carrot and quietly cry.

I'm hungry, I'm lonesome, and life is a bore—  
But isn't that what January is for?  
Unable to giggle, no longer a riot.  
Happy New Year to all and to all a good diet!