

Whippoorwill E-Comment

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Message in a Bottle

PUBLISHING a paper in the AAPA bundle is tantamount to writing a short note, sealing it in a bottle, and tossing it into the sea. The chances of someone responding to such an act seems to be about as probable as getting a response to a paper distributed in a monthly AJ bundle. One hears more from actively participating publishers than from the vast silent majority membership. Most of the few souls who responded to my printed papers did so by e-mail. I regularly send my thanks to active publishers by e-mail, an immediate and most efficient method of communication. Most publishers react to my electronic acknowledgements also by e-mail, providing a stimulating feedback.

The universe of AJ is a very small one that invites analogies to the larger whole. Cosmologists, astronomers, and physicists agree in the belief that matter only comprises about 5% of the Cosmos. Some 95% is an invisible dark matter that has mysterious properties – chief among which is the fact that it is undetectable. The majority of AJ membership is likewise undetectable. We do have some evidence that there are people out there – we have membership lists after all, so I have to assume that they may exist. Furthermore, most of them have listed e-mail addresses, and theoretically could be contacted. With e-mail address one knows they have access to the internet, though virtually none use their readily accessible word processing tools to create an electronic journal, let alone a small journal that could easily be photocopied to produce

copies for the monthly snail mail bundles. This borders on, if it is not actually, negligence. If these members do not have access to type and press, or cannot afford the expense of acquiring one, they must realize that they can easily create e-journals to share with others at no expense for paper, type, presses, or even postage.

AJ is potentially, theoretically, the greatest free press extant! Yet traditionally, publishers are urged not to write about the really important social issues we are all interested and immersed in. We are discouraged to write about religion or politics or the destructive course our leaders are taking our nation, often irrational philosophies that control our minds. We no longer write about our favorite typefaces, or recommended inks or presses or paper because so few members publish by letterpress. Old time members complain about the rapidly changing technological revolution in communication, especially their *need* to hold journals in their hands and experience the tactile “feel” of publications reproduced on paper. This is strange to me because most bundle papers are reproduced on the same cheapest available 20-pound bond copy paper, with varying degrees of translucency. When I receive an e-journal, I print it out on my own printer on paper far more substantial than I encounter in the bundle. Such higher quality papers are readily available at only slightly greater expense from Office Depot, or Office Max. My growing collection of e-journals has a far greater chance of archival survival than regular bundle papers.

So I urge the large number of invisible, inactive potential publishers in AAPA to produce an e-journal and become active and share their lives with us. It's the name of the game!

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