Web-based amateur journals — some further thoughts

There's much more to web-based amateur journals the more I think about it. This discussion – and this first-ever NAPA web-based amateur journal, as I believe it may be – is a direct outgrowth of the No. 4 issue of this journal, which was printed on paper at the 128th Convention, in Chattanooga, and will soon be distributed through the July bundle.

What advantages are there to web-based amateur journals, and to NAPA allowing them? Here are some that I can think of:

1. No printing costs.
2. No mailing costs.
3. No paper consumed.
4. No folding, stapling, and similar material production handling.
5. Faster distribution than via the bundle or private mailing.
6. Availability of the end result to the entire World Wide Web, with publicity and recruiting potential that is unforeseeable at this time.
7. Use of a medium that many younger people are familiar with and enjoy using, hence a much simpler bridge to amateur journalism than older technologies such as letterpress and offset.
8. Offers intriguing possibility of using previously impossible enhancements, such as sound, video clips and animation.
9. Ability to easily correct omissions by novice member publishers who omit a title, a number or a date, or their name in their journals.

10. Adapting to this new publishing medium would give NAPA, the oldest surviving amateur journalism association, the distinction of being the first amateur journalism organization to embrace this medium in an official way. (At least as far as I know now, and assuming one of the others doesn't act before we can officially amend our constitution.)
11. Ability to provide active, clickable links to other parts of the journal, to other NAPA journals on the web, and in fact to sources or other documents anywhere on the web.

What disadvantages are there?

1. Not all members have computers, or access to the World Wide Web. (Reply: almost all of our members would have access to the web through their local library, if not through friends; and computer ownership will only increase in the years ahead.)
2. There is no paper tactile feeling to enjoy as one reads. (Reply: true, but while that may indeed deprive a reader of that sensation, that is not central to the hobby of amateur journalism; also, other senses such as sight and hearing can be involved in ways never before possible.)
3. Archiving back issues would be difficult. (Reply: archiving would need to be accomplished on digital media such as CDs or whatever future technology may bring about, which actually may consume

far less space than paper journals, but also be backed up more readily and thus available anywhere, not just where physical collections of papers might exist. Furthermore, electronic searching for names, words or phrases is possible in digitally archived media whereas it is impossible for print journals without extensive and time-consuming indexing.)

4. What if NAPA were *swamped* with amateur web-based journals, so that the Recorder, the Historian, the Bureau of Critics and others might find their duties far too taxing. (Reply: that could conceivably be a problem which might arise, much as a couple of decades ago it was thought burdensome to have a membership as high as 400 for the same reasons. Conceivably, most if not all of that administrative work could be subdivided and done by teamed individuals rather than by one individual working alone; for example, the *Bureau* of Critics used to be a *group* of people. But the desirability of recruiting new – and younger – members is growing more evident in recent years as opposed to such considerations.)

Your thoughts and responses would be most welcome, either to me (and I will gladly report them), or you may wish to design your own web-based amateur journal that I would be glad to add to the space on the server I am using. Perhaps we could even start a monthly e-bundle to match the paper bundle? My current server provides 20 megabytes of free web storage space for their customers, and when that becomes too small, we can either purchase more storage or look elsewhere.

Note that I assume that web-based amateur journals should meet our requirements for a title, a number and/or a date, and and identified member as publisher.

My address is in the colophon.

I Could Kick Myself

Arriving home from the convention tired, when I carried in our HP LaserJet 4M laser printer, but instead of carrying it up to Ruth's work area on the second floor, where it belonged, I lazily put it on the dining room table, whose two drop-leaves are held up by swivel arms when raised. I put the printer half on a drop-leaf and half on the main part of the table, and it seemed quite steady enough. But as Ruth and I were reading in bed, we heard a crash from downstairs. Evidently one of our cats had jumped up on that drop-leaf, and its weight was just enough to tip the whole table over onto the floor.

Three of the side panels on the printer were askew, the paper drawer was sticking a bit, and the trap-door giving access to the toner cartridge was partially unhinged.

Hoping for the best, I tried fitting the panels, etc., back on in the hope that at least it would print. When I powered it on, it got as far as flashing the message "13 Paper Jam." There was no paper in it.

Maybe it's time for a color laser printer.

Or maybe it's time to publish on the web.

I Could Kick Myself Again

But a bit softer. I had only printed enough copies of *Chattanooga Chat Chat* No. 4 to hand out to conventioneers on Sunday morning. I figured I'd let the rest of the job go until I got that HP LaserJet home again.

The disaster in the dining room prevented that, but fortunately my office printer is another HP LaserJet 4, so I planned to finish the bundle run on it.

All was well, I thought, and all copies had been printed (two-pages up, duplicated, on legal size paper, front and back), when I noticed that the masthead logo on the bottom half of the outside-pages sheet had for some unknown reason jumped to page 4. Half the copies in that run, therefore, were trash.

Maybe it's another sign I should publish on the web, but I am certain careful attention to detail and to proofreading is just as

necessary there.