My Cup of Tea

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FLAPS BEGET MORE FLAPS….

The concern raised among some members of both AAPA and NAPA has apparently grown from "concern" to outright panic, as evidenced by the latest action of two of the three official judges of AAPA. Why am I surprised? Because one of those people has heretofore occupied a place within amateur journalism which is far above such questionable conduct. It saddens me to discover that another of our respected leaders may have feet of clay.

This is the flap about electronic journals. It has grown from being a nuisance to the hardline letterpress printers into the rush to force it out of AAPA that now rages within certain entrenched segments of the organization. It astounds me to find that such longtime established traditionalists are so fearful that e-journals will destroy the entire fabric of AAPA. What causes a fear such as this?

Could it be that e-journals, which are virtually expense free, would offer such a tempting opportunity that those who now publish by other methods would quickly abandon their slow and expensive presses or give up their photocopying and mailing tasks in favor of electronic publishing? It appears that this is exactly what certain of AAPA's elite think will result from giving recognition to e-journals. It seems unlikely to me that this would happen, but perhaps I place too much faith in the loyalty of a publisher to his publishing method.

Loyalty to the highest standards of amateur journalism, as I understand it, is being battered to death by those who have defined that loyalty according to their own personal desires and jealousies, which of late seems to impose definite limits and restrictions on what was once an open and welcoming fraternity of journalists with a common goal to promote and to share the satisfaction of participating in the old and honored traditions of journalism. My own loyalty is to those ideals wherein writing and publishing is appreciated for its own merit rather than for the package in which it is presented.

While the monthly bundle represents an old and cherished method of sharing our journals, it is not the absolute necessity for survival that some would have you believe today. The truth is that amateur writers and publishers will continue to exchange their work by one means or another, and no one system can preserve or destroy an association of ajayers who are active in a hobby they enjoy. Such supposition is a clear case of the boy crying "wolf!"

The argument that e-journals are not to be accepted because not every member is afforded the opportunity to read those journals is no more valid than an argument against holding annual conventions because not every member can attend. As I see it, if every member has opportunities to read e-journals, the requirements are satisfied—whether that member chooses to read the journal or not is immaterial. I daresay that not even 75% of members receiving the bundle ever read it, yet the fact that they receive it qualifies those journals for full recognition. There is a flaw in assuming that every journal is read by every member, yet that seems to be the standard by which journals are judged if the arguments against e-journals are to be believed. It has been my pleasure to meet and share fellowship with a goodly number of both AAPA and NAPA members, and I have not yet found any who seem to have just recently fallen off a turnip truck.

To those who feel that publishers of e-journals should go away and establish a group of their own, I will certainly consider that as soon as AAPA and NAPA change their names from Amateur Press Association to something more descriptive of what they have become. Some of our longevity-blessed members might find that e-journals are no less journalistic than their hard copy counterparts.

--Hugh Singleton