

WHIPPOORWILL E-COMMENT



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On the Permanency of AAPA Journals

OUR president, Sky Shipley, in a well-written opinion concerning E-journals in the *American Amateur Journalist*, brought up the subject of lack of permanency of electronic journals as an objection to them. I believe that such journals should be printed out on the members' printers, on good, high rag content paper. The only documents produced by the AAPA that have any permanency whatsoever are the bound volumes of the *AAJ* and *Ink Cahoots*. And I believe that there is only one permanent copy of the *AAJ* – in the possession of the official editor which is passed along to the next elected editor. I support the *Ink Cahoots*, our cooperative yearbook, mainly because it is bound and has greater permanency than nearly all of the many ephemeral papers distributed in the bundles. There is no permanency in most AJ papers. The only publisher I know who regularly collates and binds his journal in boards is Harry Spence, and he alone has a permanent record of his writing. You are probably like me – possessing hundreds of bundles of papers stored in the 6x9 kraft envelopes they were mailed in. Probably only Les Boyer and Vic Moitoret have their collections of AJ papers catalogued and stored in an organized fashion. They can find specific papers easily when they need to. I have only a vague idea where my spring issue of *Oregon* for 2002 is stored. I should pull copies of this fine journal and bind them permanently into boards so they can be stored properly on one of my bookshelves to be enjoyed as a unity.

When I first started printing, Carolyn Hammer gave me a valuable piece of advice. She told me that most printing was

ephemeral, and that the only chance an ephemeral piece had of surviving and being accessible was if it was bound in boards. She said even single-sheet publications should be properly bound, otherwise, it is as ephemeral as grass. I have thought about her sage advice, and agree with her, though have done little in the way of following her instructions about my own publications. I do print out the e-journals I receive on far better paper than the 20 pound bond most bundle papers are printed on, which surely makes the publications more permanent.

But despite our protestations to the contrary, AJ is moribund. The hobby printer groups are populated by a rapidly aging geriatric set of merry people – mostly men – and we have not been able to recruit many young people into the hobby. I have watched the shift from almost strictly letterpressed journals 34 years ago when I first entered AJ to almost exclusively computer generated photocopied journals that dominate our bundles today. Yes, it is nice to hold the papers in our hands and enjoy them, but we have that potential already if we print out the e-journals we receive. Despite well-meaning protestations about e-papers, the hobby has evolved so rapidly around us that few have paid attention to the direction it is heading. I remember being chided a few years ago for predicting the heavy use of computers in AJ. Without them today there would be few papers in our bundles. I counted over 160 members in the latest membership list who had e-mail addresses. I still contend that e-journal production and distribution is inevitable, and will surely be the salvation of AJ. But we ought to be doing something about the permanency of our papers – binding them and getting them into permanent collections in libraries where they can be stored properly and cared for. We've *always* had that problem. But e-publishing is not a problem—it is rather a solution. Let's have your opinions.

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