

Longevity

Speculation about whether a magazine dedicated to hands-on audio gear can survive seems to be widespread these days. Gene Pitts, distinguished editor of the occasional magazine, prophesied on the subject not too long ago talking to Boston Audio Society members. He suggested that our magazines would disappear when the publisher does. Maybe, maybe not.

The publisher is certainly older, but not an old person. He gave that up some time ago, deciding against old age. He has a strict diabetic diet, works out three days per week at the local Wellness Center (weights, treadmills, all manner of exercise machines), is careful with medications, and has multi-checkups. All reports are positive so far and he intends to keep it that way. Fortunately, he chose the right parents with excellent genes, and just for good measure wears a jewel in his left ear.

No one asks what he/she can do to help ensure the survival of our publications. But I do not believe that is a barrier to my discussing the matter with you. First of all, we have a great opportunity in that like so much else in our time, we have become international. *audioXpress* is the only English-language periodical in the whole world dealing with audio as a hands-on-enterprise.

And we are helped enormously by the cheap US dollar. The British are able to buy two of our dollars with one of their pounds sterling. So we are half price to our potential readers in the sterling zone. Europeans are able to acquire a dollar and four dimes with one of their Euros.

We are a cheap buy even with the extra we must charge for overseas postage.

So those of you in our rapidly growing list of overseas readers are invited to spread the word: *audioXpress* is alive and well, and cheap. Grab a three-year sub while the dollar is weak and we will send you an English version of Jean Hiraga's classic audio obstacle course on CD. We even have a few in the original French if any of you citizens of that Republic would like one.

The other good news about our own little version of globalization is that our author roster is growing by leaps and bounds—now above 850 total. Most of the growth is from overseas: New Zealand, France, Spain, Brazil, Greece, India, to name just a few. Many are professionals—as has always been the case with those who write for *aX*. We do not recruit authors; we welcome articles, of course. We do not pay very much, far less than other mags we could mention who regularly offer anything from 65 cents to \$1 per word.

The question of the magazine's survival is larger than the publisher's health, however.

The presence of advertisers in our pages is the result of concerted efforts on the part of the persons in our sales company who get up early daily over in Gloucester, Mass., to invite audio companies all over the world to place their offerings in the pages of *aX*. Some days they sleep in the mornings to talk to advertisers in the evening because the clients live in time zones halfway around the world.

You could give them, and us, a very

large assist in a rather simple way. After each issue of one of our publications comes out, I sit down at my computer keyboard and leaf through looking at the ads. I am usually happily surprised by newcomers and wonder how you will respond to them. I am also unhappily surprised sometimes at the absence of some.

Would you consider a simple request from me? Whenever your issue arrives, set aside some time, perhaps an hour, to look through and consider the ads seriously. Click on their web addresses and see what they are about. If you need more information about their product, give them a call. Many of these enterprises are run by people just like yourself who are turning a hobby interest into a small business, usually specializing in a product or two.

Others of our advertisers are quite large, thank God, and believe in DIY enough that they allocate some of their budgets to contracts for our space. All of them are interesting and worth knowing about. If they know, from your response, that they interest you, then their impulse to renew their contracts is likely to be stronger. You have a direct influence on the effectiveness of advertising in *aX*. I do not expect your decisions about purchases to be influenced by anything other than the quality and usefulness of the products offered. Your responsiveness, however, is one of the most important ways, beyond subscription, which can ensure the survival of this periodical.—E.T.D.