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Keep sure of God!



“Was [Gamaliel], then, right? Could he then, can [a person] today, leave all to God and be quietly sure that He will vindicate the truth? A thousand fluctuations in the varying battle make us doubt. Many and many a time it seems as if between the error and the truth it were merely a question of which had the cleverest [people] upon its side. And yet we know that, if there be a God at all, Gamaliel was right. . . . There must be time, there must be patience; but the real final question of two trees is the question of their roots. That which is rooted in God must live. There is no hope or peace anywhere in the world if this is not true. Who cares which way the fickle wind is blowing at this minute if there be no purpose which stands behind and governs it, no One who holds the winds in His hands? But if there be, who will not labour bravely, trying to put himself into the current of the great purpose of the world; begging to be defeated if he mistakes the great purpose and is helping evil when he thinks that he is helping good; ready to wait and work through all delays; with infinite patience ready to see men blundering and going wrong; ready to help them if he can – sure of one thing and only one, that in the end, through every hindrance and delay, God must do right? . . . Therefore be earnest and keep sure of God! Be earnest and keep sure of God! We who believe in Christ dare to be confident and say that we know that to every such soul the Way, the Truth, the Life must show himself at last!” – Phillips Brooks, *Sermons Preached in English Churches* (3rd series) (E. P. Dutton, 1883).

The times, they are a changin’

By Scott Yakimow



Say what you will about the 2010 convention of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, no one can deny that the key word was “change.” This 64th triennial convention, held in Houston in July, will be remembered for making changes of historic proportions. At least on the national level, I should hasten to add; what effect the changes will have on the districts, circuits and congregations is yet to be seen. Not only are LCMS’ers greeting a new president, but they are facing a new way of conducting the mission of the Synod, with two new “super boards” replacing the seven previous boards. One thing does remain the same for the foreseeable future, however. Mother Mo remains Mother Mo, and this despite what I thought was my rather dashing offering of a new name for “Our Beloved Synod” in my convention preview [“Houston, we have a problem (or two),” *FL*, June 2010]. Some things, you know, never change.

Powerful coordination

First up on the agenda was consideration of proposals from the Committee on Structure and Governance. [For background, see "Blue Ribbon Musings," *FL*, March 2010.] Of the 40 resolutions proffered by the floor committee, only about 45% were actually enacted. Several of their proposals never even came to a vote. But those that were adopted will make sweeping changes in key areas.

Let's start with the most far-reaching resolution adopted, 8-08A. The upshot is that all boards and standing commissions (with the exception of the Commissions on Theology and Church Relations, Constitutional Matters, and Handbook) will cease to exist. In their place will be two new boards, described as the national and the international mission boards. All the responsibilities of the previous program boards will continue, assigned either to one of the new boards or to some other entity (e.g., the districts or the LCMS Board of Directors). The theory is that essential functions will remain at the national level, while other matters will be assigned elsewhere or cease altogether. That's the theory; it's the implementation that will count.

This makes for an interesting situation with lots of opportunities (which, in my engineering days, was a codeword for "problems"). One great benefit I can see in this new structure is that related concerns can be integrated—for example, the human care aspect of mission can operate in conjunction with the evangelistic aspect. During my ministry in East Africa, I longed to have an on-site coordinator of human care projects who could work with us as part of our world mission team. I didn't realize at the time that the differences between the two boards made such an idea difficult, to say the least. Instead of a natural, hand-in-glove union of the two, there were many good-willed but still *ad hoc* efforts to accomplish this goal. This was really the best the old system could do, given its strictures. Evangelism and human care both occurred, but not in the most cooperative manner possible. With the new system, it should now be possible to have a single team that can look at both spiritual and physical needs in a given context, and work to address those in a seamless fashion. Pretty cool.

On the flip side, the biggest objection I've heard is to the centralization of power. Despite the mantra "centralization of coordination, not power,"

it's hard to distinguish the two. Those who coordinate get to shape the project and have great influence on its outcome, so calling this "power" really isn't off the mark. Of course power is a neutral thing in that it can be used for good or for ill. Which means that now the election of synodical leadership will become even more important. Oh, and consequently more politicized.

Thanks, but no thanks

Not all the proposals for structural change were adopted. Resolution 8-18 would have changed the constitution to hold national conventions every four years instead of three, thereby saving a bunch of money (\$6 million over 12 years) and providing more time for circuit and district theological colloquia. It sounded like a "no-brainer" to me, and it did garner 58% of the vote (680-495), but that was about 100 votes shy of the required 2/3. There was much talk about such a change reducing the input of the grassroots, but as this seemed unpersuasive (at least to me), I have a hard time explaining the outcome as anything other than a love of attending conventions. Or perhaps people were hedging their bets, lest their preferred candidate for synodical president was defeated. The oddsmakers were reading the tea leaves of every early convention vote as an indicator of who would eventually be elected; maybe this proposal fell victim to such oddsmaking.

Another important structural proposal was referred back to committee. Resolution 8-05B called for reducing greatly the number of voting delegates, who would no longer be elected by circuits but by "electoral clusters." The idea was to de-politicize the circuits and allow them to focus upon joint mission, theological conversation and ecclesial oversight. The shape of the "electoral clusters" would be left up to the districts, but might involve, for instance, the joining together of two or more circuits.

This would also have at least two implications. First, it would save money by roughly halving the number of delegates. But another that wasn't openly expressed is that it would encourage more turnover in the delegates. At this convention there were many folks who bordered on being "professional delegates," attending their third, fourth or even fifth convention. They were often among the most active voices at the microphones. When someone is a delegate so many times, it makes

one wonder if the congregations they represent are the ones getting the voice, or if it's just the delegate himself advocating his own agenda. This resolution, by essentially increasing the "competition" to be a delegate, could have resulted in delegate turnover that might be more helpful to the LCMS in the long run. But no decision was made this time, so the next convention will be elected by the old rules.

The limits of conventional wisdom

All these structural matters were preliminary to the main event, the election of a synodical president. Conventional wisdom (meaning the folks I talked to, though they were from both "sides") was that President Gerald Kieschnick would win a fourth term by a nose. The thinking went something like this: "Most of the structural proposals are passing, and he is in favor of them. Therefore, he'll be elected." Of course that turned out not to be the case. Oddsmakers notwithstanding, the first ballot was, by LCMS standards, a virtual landslide for Pastor Matthew Harrison—643-527, with three other candidates receiving a combined 14 votes. Immediately after the results were announced, a number of things happened. President Kieschnick looked absolutely stunned, but quickly and graciously collected himself in a commendable manner. Someone on the floor gave a loud yell of "YES!"—not appropriate, many thought. And though there was scattered applause, it was very brief and ultimately self-muted.

President-elect Harrison then gave an acceptance speech that hit all the right notes. His demeanor was quiet, calm and almost contrite. He opened by waxing biblical: "If one man suffers, all suffer together; if one man rejoices, all rejoice," thereby acknowledging the surprise and pain in the room of those who felt they had lost. He acknowledged his own sinfulness and said that he will sin again and need forgiveness again. But perhaps the most memorable line was: "I will not coerce you"—possible coercive policies being a concern of many Kieschnick supporters prior to the election.

Pr. Charles Mueller, Jr., a leader of Jesus First (a group in the LCMS that strongly supported President Kieschnick), stood to request that the assembly give a standing acclamation to show their commitment to work with President-elect Harrison, and that it be recorded in the minutes. Turns out that Pr. Mueller had tried to go even further than this. He

had approached the parliamentarian with the idea that in the event of a victory by Pr. Harrison, he would request from the floor that the decision be recorded as unanimous by common consent of the assembly. Apparently this idea is a parliamentary no-no, so he instead was told that he could request the standing acclamation and have it recorded in the minutes. Nicely done, and a gracious move.

Electoral musings

In the wake of the electoral upset, there has been a distinct lack of acrimony across the synod. At least there has been little directed toward our new president; President Kieschnick is still being criticized in some quarters, hardly a gracious thing on the part of those whose guy "won." Many Kieschnick supporters now seem willing to give Harrison a chance, and to work with him. Call it the honeymoon period, but it is refreshing. Of course there will be another election in 2013, and I'm thinking the political machines will soon start to grind once again, especially now that the synod president has even more power, uh, I mean ability to coordinate.

On *Forum Online*, I proposed the idea of casting lots for synod president among the top nomination-getters, and that the office be "for life" (perhaps with a mandatory retirement age). I still like that idea as being more churchly, respecting the Great Tradition and reducing the political turmoil every three years. I guess this idea will have to remain my own private hope; I don't see such a change happening anytime soon.

Other elections

As for other elections, pull out a United List voting guide and you'll pretty much see who won. Layman Mark Miller did a nice statistical analysis of the results on *Forum Online*; he demonstrated that 68 of the 82 candidates endorsed by the United List (for 92 positions) were elected—an 83% success rate. Who writes the United List, you ask? That's a good question, and I'm really not sure. It's done anonymously but is known to be of a more "conservative" or "confessional" bent (highly loaded terms in the LCMS). On the other hand, the more "moderate" Jesus First list endorsed someone for all 92 positions and only 27 were elected, with a few of these also being endorsed by the "United List." Combine these elections with the consolidation of authority into

two new boards, and what you have is probably the biggest shift in political orientation that Missouri has seen in some time. It should be pointed out that the political winds have been blowing the opposite way over the last few conventions, so that this is in a way a natural reaction. But I wonder about the role that lists play. Is it really such a good idea to have anonymous or semi-anonymous lists exercising such influence? Even if their origin wasn't somewhat shadowy, the lists only serve to further politicize the synod and, when changes come (as they naturally do), the lists exacerbate those changes, resulting in a herky-jerky pendulum swing from side to side. Without lists, change would still occur, but there might be greater continuity, and that would be a good thing.

Addressing the ELCA

Besides the two big ticket items of structure and elections, the floor committee on Theology and Church Relations was also quite important. Resolution 3-01A gave a response to the ELCA's decisions at their 2009 Churchwide Assembly regarding sexuality. Put briefly, the LCMS strongly disagrees. Along with the Christian church over the millennia, the LCMS sees same-gender sexual activity as being contrary to Scripture. The resolution rather impishly commends the ELCA's acknowledgement that its decisions "stand in sharp contrast to this genuinely ecumenical Christian consensus." It passed without discussion by a vote of 1133-35.

It did become clear in subsequent discussion, however, that many believe the ELCA is walking away from the LCMS, not vice-versa. By adopting this resolution, delegates not only voiced their disagreement with the ELCA's interpretation of Scripture, but warned her that she is veering off into becoming a sect.

The next resolution (3-02A) was also significant for LCMS/ELCA relations. In it, the LCMS pledged her support for confessional Lutheranism worldwide by, among other things, formally requesting that the ELCA reconsider the decision made regarding sexuality at the 2009 CWA. It also commended by name Word Alone, Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ, Lutheran CORE and similar groups. Given that these groups are, or began as, protest movements within the ELCA, I would imagine that some in the ELCA will see this

as meddling — though others will welcome the LCMS witness that the Gospel is at stake in this debate, and understand that such accusations must be risked out of Christian love for the neighbor. This resolution passed 1093-61, again without debate.

What does this mean?

There was, however, significant debate over one further resolution concerning LCMS/ELCA relations. Resolution 3-03 was entitled "Cooperation in Externals with Theological Integrity." For the uninitiated, "cooperation in externals" refers to those ministries that deal with physical, as opposed to spiritual, needs — ministries such as Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran Social Services. This resolution sought to continue such work, but also to initiate a study to develop "theological criteria for assessing cooperative endeavors, determining what would necessitate termination of such cooperative efforts."

As it was worded, this did not sit well with many delegates. An amendment was offered mandating an "exit strategy" from such ministries to be presented to the next convention. It was defeated, one of the strongest arguments against it being that this would hamstring LCMS influence in those organizations insofar as the LCMS would be viewed as on the way out. An even stronger substitute motion was made that would have ended all cooperation with the ELCA immediately. This motion was not debated as it needed a 2/3 vote to be considered, and it received only 43%. But that 43% suggests that a significant number of delegates were willing to drop all cooperative ministries immediately.

Uncooperation

Throughout the debate, many expressed their desire to send the ELCA a stronger message by pulling out of these ministries and doing the work on our own or with other partners. Others — and these tended to be folks in leadership or those who are actually involved with the ministries — urged caution, pointing out that real lives are on the line, and that disruption in groups such as LWR could have serious repercussions, even leading to death of some of those they serve. This provoked one of the weirdest responses from a delegate that I heard at the convention. One guy stood up and said, and this is close to a quote, "We can't blackmail ourselves by talking about people dying." I guess that if folks

would just be more considerate and not die on us, we could probably talk about the right thing. After it became clear that the resolution as presented was really the only viable option, it passed easily, 961-175.

Conventional worship, and not

A final note on worship. Throughout the convention traditional hymns were sung but they were generally set to jazzy, contemporary-sounding music. Yet it's the opening worship service that has attracted the most attention, both pro and con. While it followed the traditional liturgical order (with the slight variation of placing the Kyrie between the confession and the absolution), it blended different worship styles, both in the music employed and in some variations on the wording of the traditional elements. For a full analysis, I would recommend that you read the thread on *Forum Online* dedicated to it (<http://tiny.cc/y08tb>).

One liturgical bit will remain an enduring image from that service: the main processional cross, which was made out of what appeared to be crystal. The name for it that immediately popped into my head was "Our Resurrected Lord of the Light Saber," which is not to say that it was unappealing but somewhat, well, surprising. It was easily the most

high-tech thing I have ever seen carried in a liturgical procession, glowing with its own internal light (hence the light-saber reference). One friend suggested the symbolism was that of the resurrected Lord placed over the Christ candle. Maybe so, but I thought it was just done to look cool. Oh, and the shadow actually looked like a man with his arms upraised if you shined a spotlight on it. Very techy.

Big job ahead

In any case, the 2010 LCMS convention was all about change, and change was indeed embraced. President-elect Harrison has a big job ahead of him, especially since his avowed purpose is to bring unity to our synod. He hopes to do this through a process called the "Koinonia Project," which deserves its own article. So does our new president's view of the church, touched on only lightly, I'm afraid, in this piece. Reason is, I may just write something else in the near future on my interview with him. Stay tuned.

Scott Yakimow is an LCMS pastor, currently doing graduate study at the University of Virginia. He covered the 2010 LCMS convention for Forum Online; you can read his on-the-scene reports, and discussion about them, at <http://tiny.cc/enjub>

Houston 2010: reflections of a parish pastor

by Wade A. Miller



The blogs and Facebook posts went wild after the Rev. Matthew C. Harrison defeated incumbent president Dr. Gerald Kieschnick at the 2010 LCMS convention. The contest was portrayed as confessional Lutheranism (Harrison) versus the neo-evangelical party represented by the group Jesus First (Kieschnick). For some the emotional impact brought to mind the 2008 election of Barack Obama as U. S. President. After Harrison's victory, some confessional Lutherans said they were moved to tears. Many described their overwhelming emotions of joy and happiness, throwing off the yoke of nine years of the Kieschnick presidency. And yet as an observer who was indifferent to the Missouri Synod Presidential run, I noticed two glaring oddities that represent the current

state of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Sartorial oddity

The first was the appearance of the candidates themselves. Dr. Kieschnick wore his clerical collar, looking very much like a distinguished churchman. This did not surprise me; I had only seen Dr. Kieschnick in his clerical garb. But Pr. Harrison dressed in a suit and tie. This struck me as odd; previously, in synodical magazine photos and at his occasional appearance at the seminary where I attended, I had only seen him dressed in his clerical shirt and collar. Why was he now dressed like he was going to a Southern Baptist Convention? It made me think of what we learned in studying the good old Seminec days of the 1970's. The diehard

conservatives and Bible defenders decked themselves out with their trendy plaid suits and wide ties while the more liberal crowd strapped on their collars, ready to defend themselves against what they deemed an unhealthy and un-Lutheran Biblicism.

The second oddity was the reaction and response to the outcome of certain resolutions and elections. A day before the Harrison and Kieschnick showdown came the hot topic of restructuring. The convention voted to restructure the Synod, giving the leadership more control, and the confessional party was upset. Some thought the LCMS was heading towards an episcopal form of church polity, giving too much authority to a hierarchy. To many in the confessional crowd, the devious plan of Jesus First and Kieschnick to control the Synod looked as though it was going to win the day. The congregational form of absolute democracy was being threatened. Would this be the beginning of a great persecution? Would there need to be a new synod formed around the radical congregational polity of Missouri's first patriarch, C. F. W. Walther?

The pendulum swings

The next day came the much anticipated election for president. To nearly everybody's surprise, Harrison won rather easily on the first ballot. Even more shocking, all but one vice president was from the confessional camp. After this stunning result, I did not hear too many confessional people complaining about the restructuring of Synod. The pendulum had swung back to its proper place in their minds—the place of Luther, Chemnitz, Gerhard, Walther, Pieper, and now Harrison.

I remember the disappointment after the previous elections that Kieschnick won—blog messages about the theology of the cross and living a life of suffering were the salve for a wounded group of confessional Lutherans. This time, however, there was no mention of the theology of the cross. Who needs to think about that when you are on top? Redemption had drawn nigh and Harrison was the man to help put a broken Synod back into its place. People were awestruck by Harrison's speech. His first interview following his election was with the Gnesio-Lutheran talk show, *Issues, Etc.*, which had a bone to pick with Kieschnick and the LCMS Board of Communications for taking them off the air in 2008. That action did not help the Kieschnick cause,

as *Issues, Etc.* began airing their show on Pirate Radio, promoting the candidacy of Matthew Harrison. Harrison began the interview by saying to host Todd Wilken that he was humbled because he is a sinner. I could not help but think of the broken televangelist, Jimmy Swaggert, who began his confession in the same way. Harrison was somber, painfully diffusing any thought that he might be gloating or basking in his victory. As for Dr. Kieschnick, there was disappointment in his expression and voice after the election, but he still portrayed the churchmanship of a leader and president.

Beyond narcissism

The question that looms large: What will be the aftermath of the 2010 Convention of the LCMS? I would like to offer some thoughts from an insignificant parish pastor who quite frankly does not fit into either theological camp. First, I would say that Dr. Kieschnick did accomplish an enormous feat in that he called the LCMS to engage the world with the Gospel. His *Ablaze!* movement challenged a church body that has often wallowed in its parochial systems and ideas to get beyond its narcissism and to give a reason for the hope that is within us. Many thought *Ablaze!* was ridiculous, but at least it called for action outside of self (a pretty Lutheran idea). My personal opinion is that *Ablaze!* often has lacked any real theological substance. As I told my district president, Dr. David Benke, *Ablaze!* needs less Billy Sunday and more Fulton Sheen. My hope is that Harrison will continue the passion Dr. Kieschnick provided for reaching the lost, but will frame it in a sacramental and vocational perspective that is consistent with the Augsburg Confession.

Another issue (the big purple elephant in the room that nobody wants to talk about) pertains to our educational institutions. It was the 2007 convention that sanctioned the new Specific Ministry Pastor program (SMP). This is a path to ministry that circumvents the traditional four-year model of on-campus seminary training for the non-traditional student. Students can stay in their home parishes, working at jobs without uprooting their families, in order to study and serve under local parish pastors. They can still enroll at one of the seminaries, but they attend only occasionally, doing condensed modules of learning while studying from a distance. Knowing that SMP was going to pass, both seminar-

ies (Fort Wayne, IN and St. Louis, MO) jumped on board, hoping to bolster their enrollments. For years people had been talking about the shortage of pastors in the LCMS. What people were not talking about was how many parishes wanted pastors but could not afford them. Sadly, thirty graduating seminarians did not receive calls this past spring.

Asking impolite questions

With SMP in place and with the LCMS shrinking in numbers, the question has to be raised, "Why two seminaries?" Simple logic and a bit of common sense should dictate that the need for two seminaries is past. The same question needs to be asked about our synodical colleges. If our centers of higher learning are Lutheran in name only, then why continue to stay open? If a place is not financially solvent, then why continue to struggle along while accepting academic mediocrity rather than excellence?

Whether one agrees with Dr. Kieschnick and the task force on the restructuring plan of Synod or not, at least one must admire their willingness to do something! Leadership is not merely basking in the glory days of the Missouri Synod or trying to return us to an era that has passed. The LCMS needs leadership, someone who will make difficult decisions even if it costs him re-election. That is when the theology of the cross becomes something lived rather than a concept admired. Some seminary professors would say that such talk is not pastoral, meaning that you might make people mad and jeopardize your own career. Our Lord calls leaders to be faithful. We need leaders who desire sacrifice over personal or institutional self-preservation.

New ethos, or repristination?

The final plea I would make is that we need to be in dialogue. When I was in seminary, some of

our former graduates had left the beloved LCMS to swim the Bosphorus. Out of that ordeal came a paranoia that led to back-stabbing and a sense of distrust. When I mentioned having an Eastern Orthodox theologian speak at a yearly symposium in Fort Wayne, I was told that that could never happen because too many students had abandoned their confession by going into the false teaching of Eastern Orthodoxy. Unfortunately, that is still where the LCMS is today. Instead of dialogue, there is name-calling and demonizing, causing some pastors simply to hide and avoid any involvement in the Synod at all. My Jimmy Swaggert moment is that I am one that has put all my energy into serving my parish, not caring about the Synod one iota. I realize that is not right or healthy, but even in writing this little reflection I fear some backlash for my comments.

I have heard some say that if you do not believe in a literal 24-hour, six-day creation account, then you are not a Christian. Instead of our seminaries dialoguing openly about Roman Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy as we grapple with the issues, students are warned to keep their mouths shut for fear of not getting a call or being sent to a place that you would not wish on your worst enemy. Pr. Harrison can bring a new ethos to the LCMS, and a new respect from our fellow Christians; he can make difficult decisions in order to be faithful and lead the LCMS to walk together on the same path. Or he can attempt to repristinate, to recreate an imagined past, and the LCMS will continue its vicious cycle of paranoid parochialism. To borrow Pr. Harrison's campaign slogan, "It's time!" It is time to get beyond ambition, time for all to be servants of Christ, our crucified Savior and Shepherd. *Kyrie eleison!*

Wade A. Miller is pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church (LCMS), Brooklyn, NY. This is his first contribution to Forum Letter.

Omnium gatherum



Our manatee who art in the Gulf • I've poked fun from time to time at the prayers suggested on sundaysandseas.com, but I want you to know it could be worse, much worse. My wife recently received an email forwarded from a friend involved in some kind of

spiritualistic organization (Unity, Religious Science, something like that) who explained that some Japanese scientist (I'm using that word rather loosely) has proven that water actually can respond to human emotions. So they were promoting regular repetition (with sincerity, of course) of the following

"prayer" for the Gulf of Mexico: "To whales, dolphins, manatees, pelicans, seagulls and all aquatic bird species, fishes, shellfish, planktons, corals, algae and all other creatures in the Gulf of Mexico, I am sorry. Please forgive me. Thank you. I love you." Even s&s.com hasn't got us praying to nature quite yet, though I'm expecting it any time now. I did a little trawling on the internet and found at least one Presbyterian pastor who said he was going to include this in the prayers at his church, with which the ELCA is in full communion.

Snarky • Church of the Living God in Houston was an independent Chinese congregation which became part of the ELCA. Their pastor was even a dean in the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod. After the churchwide assembly sexuality decisions last summer, the congregation decided it needed to withdraw from the ELCA. They entered into conversation with the synod, but when it became apparent that they would not be changing their minds about this, they received a letter from the synod's Director of Evangelical Mission. Calling attention to the partnership support covenant the congregation had signed, he told them: "My records indicate that your ministry has received, to date, \$42,096 in partnership support from your brothers and sisters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Given the clarity of your stance on the interpretation of scripture, I will assume that you are equally committed to the biblical values of honesty, integrity and abiding by the terms of the contractual relationships into which you enter. Can you please send me word on when we can expect you to return this \$42,096?" So it ap-

pears that ELCA officials, in dealing with those whose bound consciences cannot accept the decisions of the CWA, can be not only legalistic, but downright snarky. Well, one might argue, at least he said "please."

Print media: a lament • Yes, yes, we know that for many of you there was an unseemly brief gap between receiving your July issue and receiving your August issue. In other words, July was way late. Since I was preparing to go on a trip to Turkey, I got the July issue to the printer sooner than usual. Only trouble is, the staff person to whom I have always directed the copy got married and quit, and nobody bothered to tell us. So the file lingered in her now obsolete email inbox for days. Weeks. I learned about it while I was in Turkey, at which point I couldn't do much except try to find somebody state-side to deal with it. Though I had finished the August issue before I left, fortunately I hadn't sent it on to the printer yet, figuring that having two issues at once at the printer was an invitation to disaster. These are the trials and tribulations of print media these days. But by the way, it is possible to receive *Forum Letter* electronically, as a .pdf file. You don't save any money, but we do, since this is in lieu of the paper version. Your advantage is you get the issue a couple of weeks at least before the postperson can get you the hard copy. If you'd like to have your *Forum Letter* this way, contact Donna Roche at Dkralpb@aol.com. One caveat: It is your responsibility to notify us if your email address changes. Unlike the post office, ISPs don't notify us of a forwarding address.

— roj

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