



# from the editor

*E. Garry Hill*

“TRACK & FIELD NEWS IS AT A CROSSROADS. And we’re not alone in standing at this fork in the freeway: just about everybody who is in the ink & paper business is fighting the same battle. How do you provide content that is meaningful enough that people are willing to actually buy it in an age where so much of everyone’s needs is fulfilled for free on the Internet?”

**The ink-stained wretches of the world struggle to remain relevant in an electron-driven era**

How does one remain relevant? Particularly when you have the word ‘news’ in your title.”

I wrote those words in this space back in November of ‘04, and they’re even truer now than they were then. I’m motivated to address the subject again because of a very pointed letter to the editor on the subject (see p. 49), which challenges the

roll of we ink-stained wretches in an electron-driven era.

The original column was also sparked by the lead submission in the Letters section, in which the ‘04 reader said, “The September issue was a tremendous disappointment... Gentlemen, where’s the news in *T&FN*? Please don’t tell me that much of this information is available online. I subscribe to a news magazine, not a website.”

This year’s complaint is the mirror image: the writer wants *less* “news.”

So there in a nutshell is our conundrum. We still get a significant number of comments from subscribers who want more results, more news stories and more lists in our pages. They don’t care if it’s old (or even old-old) news. And there are those who have no interest in anything they might already have been able to find online.

Our market research—then as now—shows an ugly equation: to keep the bulk of our loyal longtime subscribers we can’t tweak the magazine’s content too much or we risk losing them. Unfortunately, a switch to completely “timeless” content would not only lose them, it would also come with no guarantee that they’d be replaced by new readers who would embrace the new-and-improved model.

So we’ve spent much of the last decade tweaking our content. Compared to the ‘04 offering, our pages now have far less news, results and lists. All that is available almost on a daily basis on our website, so our goal is a meshing of the two entities for the perfect ongoing experience. We’d like to believe that nothing will ever replace ink & paper completely, and that there are many people who continue to think so.

If you want an archived record of the sport that doesn’t depend on URLs staying intact, then *T&FN* the magazine remains for you. And you can enhance that experience greatly simply by taking advantage of our online offerings. Results newsletters virtually every week of the year, detailed by-event previews of things like the Olympic Games and World Championships, the best collection of news links anywhere.

And you can, of course, maximize speed of delivery of the content by switching to or adding-on the digital version of the magazine, seeing it up to two weeks earlier than relying on a printing press and the U.S. mail.

We’ve added most of the e-world material free, and with no concomitant rise in the subscription rate. *T&FN* still costs the same as it did when the millennium turned: how many products of any kind can you say that about? Please stick with us as we continue to perform the magic feat of traveling two roads at once.

Track & Field News  
The Bible Of The Sport Since 1948  
Founded by Bert & Cordner Nelson

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