

# Rick's Place

## Notes, Thoughts, and Random Musings on the Online Experience

Wandering around backstage at a Willie Nelson concert is a bit like being the parrot on the shoulder of the guy who's running the ferris wheel. It's not the best seat in the house, but you can see enough lights, action, people, and confusion to make you wonder if anybody know's what the hell's really going on. If you're out front, of course, the show rolls along as smoothly as a German train schedule, but as Willie Nelson, like any great magician, would be the first to point out, the real show is never in the center ring.

Kinky Friedman, *Roadkill*

Quoted in Mike McGovern's cookbook *Eat, Drink, and Be Kinky*

We all can agree with the sentiment expressed above. When it is performance time there are the thousands of details - how do you get a trumpet mouthpiece out of a bassoon bocal; where is the Tipp-ex for the programs for the Ambassador's party; the Headmaster found this child in the wrong toilet. The parrot's place looks pretty good at that point. After a good performance we can begin to feel like the man operating the ferris wheel, and when it all slots into place and works we take our final bow and while gesturing to the performers and our colleagues we whisper a silent "Abracadabra"

We know we are in the business of making illusions appear to be reality. The orchestra aren't 18th century musicians, the audience aren't the court of the emperor, and the fifth grade recorder group is not a Mediaeval consort in velvet gowns treading their pavaes and bourees on a floor strewn with rose petals and aromatic herbs. We all know the truth of the Harold Hill phenomenon and have silently thanked the powers that be for the "That's my Johnny playing the trumpet!" reaction for the beginning band's first performance.

As we near the summer recess, I wish to say a thank you to all of you who keep going back to set up those lights, move that scenery, reset the chairs, collect and pass out that music, and all of the thousands of other little jobs that need to get done. We know those things are what prepares the show in the real center ring. Re-create yourselves well this summer and store up the strength and energy to keep making your students reach for parts inside themselves they didn't know they had.

Last month I speculated on the number of visitors to the Honor Band and Choir web site. When uploading some pages, I found a usage log from the service provider. This file contains a list of how many requests were made for the directory holding the site. I was a little surprised and more than a little pleased with the totals because in the first two weeks after the festival there were 7413 requests for the Honor Band and Choir web site. This confirms my suspicions about the Internet and our programs and makes the previous two columns more important, gentle reader, to you.

Because of the power of the computer and the ease with which our students use the technology, our performances no longer stop with the silence after the last note dies out in the still air of the auditorium. The video camera keeps the performance alive for later parenteal consumption. We can now edit the snapshots for the audience to send to the relatives back home and create a presence for our students not just in our local community, but in the global community.

As part of your re-creation this summer, dig out the last issue of *AMIS Updates* and try creating the example of HTML. It is easy and you *can* do it. Our Executive Consultant, with a little help from Clem, succeeded. For my fellow Mac users, it is even easier. If you are using ClarisWorks/AppleWorks versions 4 and higher, open up a word processor document, use the libraries to put in images and rulers, type in your text, then under the File menu choose "Save As" and in the following dialog box click and hold down on the pop up menu with the black triangle next to it and choose "HTML". Don't use any spaces in your file name and add ".htm" (*without the quotes!*) at the end. ClarisWorks puts all the graphics into the right format and *Et voila* a web page! Now it is time to put them on the web!

Your service provider gave you instructions on finding your personal web space. I could tell you how to do it, but the names and codes and directories are different for every user. Essentially you move your files (.htm and .jpg or whatever) to a special place where the rest of us can see them using Hyper Text Transfer Protocol (*that's what the http you have typed ten zillion times stands for. All these years you have been issuing commands to a big UNIX computer somewhere in the world and never knew it!*)

You could skip the tutorial and go to <http://home.netscape.com>, <http://www.angelfire.com>, or <http://www.geocities.com>, three amongst many others offering similar services, and register for free web space, E-mail, and lots of other goodies offered. All have template based web sites where you make choices on screen and their software creates the pages for you and puts them on the web. Mac users running OS9 can go to <http://www.apple.com> and register for iTools - Apple's free services.

Have a restful summer of re-creation. Take the chance and perch that parrot on your shoulder; create a little chaos on your computer and put your stamp on a little corner of the World Wide Web. You know it'll flash by your audience bright, shiny, and on schedule to the second.

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Stop by <http://www.bassetts.demon.co.uk/HeinSite.html> over the summer and check out the links.