

Sanity? Are you kidding

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Sanity? Are you kidding

By Raymond Johnston Jr

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Do you have what it takes to be an ezine publisher? Someone told me the other day that anyone could become a newsletter or ezine publisher. That put me into some deep thought about the situation.

I decided that it was probably true that anyone could become a publisher of an ezine or newsletter. The trick is to publish one that is successful and still keep one's sanity.

Sanity you ask? How could I possibly lose my sanity putting out an issue of a newsletter or ezine? Well my good friend, let me help you count the ways.

Right after I first started publishing, I had the chance to go up to a mountain lake with some friends one evening. I actually needed to get my ezine out but I thought what the heck, I will get up a few hours early tomorrow morning and finish putting it together. Wrong unwise one.

The next morning when I got up my electricity was off. I waited quite impatiently as I watched the hours tick away. My wife had a doctor's appointment that afternoon, so I had to leave to take her to town. She had been unable to drive for the last few months due to destroyed ligaments in her foot.

I tried to not think about it as I took her to town. Of course when we finished at the doctor's office, she insisted that I take her out to eat. Well, if you think there was any way that I could say no to that one, you obviously don't have a wife. Or you won't have one for long.

We arrived back home late in the afternoon. I was thrilled to find that the electricity was working again. I started putting together my issue of the ezine. I went to connect to the internet to send it out and could not hook up to my ISP.

I got on the phone and called my ISP and was told that they were having problems of some sort and were not sure when service would be restored.

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By this time it was getting on up in the evening and all at once the realization came that I should already have tomorrow's issue ready and yet I had not even started.

This was far from comforting. So I started putting tomorrow's issue together. I had just started working on it when my wife hollered and asked me if I was going to work all night. That's right I thought, I promised her that I would spend some time with her this evening.

After spending a couple of hours with my wife, I started working on the ezine again. I worked until about 2:00 AM. I finally finished and went up to get a few hours sleep before I had to get back up.

About 3:30 I was startled out of bed by what appeared to be a loud scream. I started running towards

my wife's bedroom when here came that startling sound again. It was my Tom Cat. He was ready to go outside. Oh I could ignore him but if you know anything about Tom Cats, that would have only punished myself more.

I went back to bed only to be awoken by a cat fight around 4:45. The Tom from the next valley over had come over to pay us a friendly visit. Of course his idea of a friendly visit was to come over and see if he could kill my cat.

Well my cat had not made any brownie points by waking me up earlier but if I did not go rescue him, I would be in the dog house with my wife. This would never work because the only pet facility that we had was a small cat palace and I already had a backache.

To heck with trying to sleep. I went to check and see if my ISP was back up. Great, I was back in business. I first sent out yesterday's issue and then put the finishing touches on today's. I then sent it out as well.

I then decided to go check my mail and make sure I received both issues. I looked at the first issue and I had forgotten to put the right address in the Title. Instead of my first name, which will show if I type the following [FIRSTNAME], I saw [FIRSTNAME. I had forgot to close my parenthesis and everyone's ezine came out addressed to [FIRSTNAME.

I then took a look at today's issue. I had typed in the wrong date on the top, I had forgotten to put contact information in my ad for a advertising special. I was not feeling real good about myself at this point.

I then looked back at my mail and saw a note addressed to me with suggestion as the subject. I thought, to heck with reading that. After the last two days, they are probably suggesting that I take a permanent vacation. I just don't know if I can take that kind of rejection right now. I need sleep.

I headed up to bed and passed my wife who was heading down the steps. She asked if I was going up to change into work clothes. My mind started churning, what had I promised to do this morning?

She brought me out of my thought by informing me that she would do the inside of the windows while I

did the outside.

Sanity? That has long since passed me by.

So back to the question, can anyone publish an ezine?

Well if the subscriber who sent me the suggestion is anywhere close to correct, I am not qualified to answer. Here is his suggestion.

You could not publish a #\$\$&*%\$ ezine if your ^\$##@*%#* life depended on it.

I also got brave and told my wife that I don't do windows.

I am now trying to get some of the sleep that my body so desperately needs but the accommodations seem less than cozy. This cat palace is sure not the luxurious place that I had been led to believe.

Honey, I was just kidding, I will gladly help with those windows.

ALL I WANT FROM SANTY IS MY SANITY

By Rev. James L. Snyder

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ALL I WANT FROM `SANTY' IS MY SANITY

Rev. James L. Snyder

Christmas is the one time of the year when it is okay to be traditional. That may be the reason why so many people look forward to the Christmas holidays.

The rest of the year most people are under the pressure to be "non-traditional," whatever that may mean. Today it is not politically correct to be traditional and if you are, you run the risk of being out of favor with the rest of society.

Christmas, however, is a different time altogether for everyone. July may be a good month to be non-traditional, but not December. There is a time to be non-traditional and then there is a time to regain your senses and enjoy the amenities of good, old-fashioned, traditionalism.

No matter how far away the young folks wander, Christmas draws them back to traditionalism like a magnet. (It might have something to do with pumpkin pie.)

One of the wonderful things about this time of the year is the many family traditions enjoyed and endured by families all around the world. In the parsonage, we have honored some great traditions through the years.

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Each year, while the gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and our little brood decorated the Christmas tree, I busied myself in the kitchen making my special eggnog.

What was so special, was that each year it was different. I could not remember from one year to the other just how I made it. Usually it turned out all right, except for the year I forgot to put in the eggs.

Another tradition in the parsonage was the Christmas wish list for good ole Santy.

One of the practical reasons for this was to prevent my children from getting me a fluorescent orange necktie with a pink hoola-dancer on it. As a minister, there are precious few places to wear such neckwear.

The children of the parsonage are grown, with children of their own now, and the "wish list" has gone the way of all good things.

It is the one tradition I miss, and I wish it could be revived. If I could revive the "wish list," there is one thing that would lead my list. All I want from dear ole Santy this year is my sanity.

The fact that I have lost my sanity, or at least, misplaced it, is quite curious. The curious thing about it is that I do not remember just when it was that I lost it.

Have you ever looked for something only to discover that you could not find it and could not remember just when you saw it last? If I could only remember when I last used my sanity, it might serve as a clue as to where it is right now.

It is not that it has been a major lost in my life, but there have been a few times when I could have used it.

For one, I could have used my sanity when I got married. Looking back, it seems that at the time, my sanity was somewhere, but not where I could use it readily.

My girlfriend (now the Mistress of the Parsonage) flashed her beautiful eyes at me and whispered, "Let's get married."

Being the gentleman that I am, I found it hard to resist the wishes of a beautiful lady. That wasn't the worst part.

While in that romantic mood she said, as if to strengthen her argument (and she got no argument from me), "After all, two can live cheaper than one."

I also could have used my sanity in several church situations. Once a church committee was interviewing me for the illustrious position of being their pastor. One of the members of the committee remarked, "And you will find, Brother Snyder, that this church really loves its pastor."

Had sanity been by my side then, I might have seen the napkins around each neck and the knife and

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fork in each hand.

As soon as I said yes and moved in, the people commenced to eat me alive. (What communion wine goes with roasted pastor?)

To be fair about this matter, there have also been times when sanity would just have gotten in the way. Sanity would have caused me to take myself too seriously. That, of course, is a big mistake.

Nobody, especially a minister, should ever take himself or herself too seriously. For example, I know that I am not as good as some of the people in the congregation think I am, and I am not as bad as others say.

Several years back, in another congregation, an elderly couple attended the church services. He developed Alzheimer's and could not come to church. She, however, was most faithful in attending. As a ministry of the church, we prepared tapes of the Sunday services, and she always took one home for her husband.

One Sunday, as she was leaving the church, she warmly shook my hand and with tears in her eyes whispered to me, "Oh, brother Snyder, you will never know how much your sermons mean to my husband since he lost his mind."

I was so thankful sanity was not by my side then. Other incidents through the years have only underscored my point. I have had many guest ministers in my pulpit throughout the years. The absence of any sense of sanity has kept me in good stead here.

Following a service with a guest speaker, invariably someone will say to the guest as they leave the church, "We sure haven't heard preaching like that for a long time. Please come back soon."

As I think about this, and add up the pros and cons, I am not sure exactly what that means.

With the stress of days like these, there is one verse from the Bible that comforts me in all this: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." (Isaiah 26:3 KJV.)

If Santy does not bring my sanity this year, it will not be a major calamity.

Rev. James L. Snyder is an award winning author and popular columnist living in Ocala, FL with his wife Martha.

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