Media Report, 1-22-2004
Nathaniel Horner, Editor in Chief

Please accept my apologies for missing this board meeting. I have an class which I cannot skip that meets from 6:00 to 9:00 on Mondays and Wednesdays. Please feel free to contact me via e-mail with any questions or comments regarding Americana.

I. Worthy of Note

We’re excited about building on our progress during the spring!

II. Recent Accomplishments

Technical
Our archiving system is well on its way to being improved.

Design
Our new site design is several issues old, and most of the bugs have been fixed.

Content
We published 7 issues last semester, including a strong special issue with “The Media” as our focus. We have recruited several new regular contributors.

Publicity
The publicity staff has plotted out all of our publicity events for the semester in an effort to be better organized and have better participation.

III. Progress Toward Goals

Briefly, our media-specific goals as outlined in last May’s assessment plan, and progress. (Goals which were described in my last media report to the board and have had no change in assessment since that time are not addressed here. Please refer to the November 11 report for a complete listing of all goals):

- Maintaining hit logs, and doubling readership by the end of the fall semester
  Data continues to be collected, although I have yet to do a detailed analysis of last semester’s data. While we did not double our readership last semester, our November readership was the second highest of any month in 2003, behind April of that year, which currently marks our record. The readership numbers for a semester seem to follow a pattern, increasing each month from the beginning to peak in April and November. By being active in publicity early on, I hope we can nudge the entire pattern upward; by starting out with better readership in January and February (setting our “base” high), we should be able to break records again this April.

- Operations and training manual
  I am discussing a possible job restructuring with the staff, and work on written job description will accompany that process.

- Funding
  As noted in my last report, “it does not seem to be in the best interests of Americana to sell advertisements on our website. Ads would detract from our design and mission, and would
require us to move to off-campus servers. In addition, our readership is such that the benefit from such ads would likely be outweighed by negative reaction” I have begun to draft a letter requesting permission to apply for a grant from the Knight foundation and should have it sent soon. Any suggestions for similar sources of funding are welcome.

• Publicity and recruitment
  As always, we need more readers and contributors. I have encouraged the publicity staff to come up with a concrete plan this semester, and I believe this plan will help our efforts be more organized and effective.

IV. Potential Problems

• Our Arts editor is currently studying abroad in Italy. So far, she has been able to work remotely. This situation will be an interesting test of the idea that a publication run mainly through online means can be successful.

• I found out this past week that our Humor editor is no longer a student. While *Americana* does publish contributions by non-students, it is our policy that all paid staff members must be students at N.C. State. His withdrawal from classes was unexpected, and we will need to find a replacement soon.

• Many of our staff positions will come open at the end of the semester. This transition will be crucial to the future success of *Americana*, as what might be loosely termed the “third generation” of editors and staff members take over.