

All the e-mail that's fit to print

BY PETER JONES

This blog and its accompanying newspaper column are brought to you by ... e-mail! That's right, e-mail. Electronic mail. Communication without borders. Letters without paper or conventional standards of grammar.

Fifteen minutes of e-mail, instead of phone calls, could save you 50 percent or more on the time you might otherwise spend on social interaction – whether or not your car insurance is hawked by an Australian lizard on TV.

You've seen billboards proclaiming adult-oriented retail to be “cheaper than dating”? Well, e-mail is cheaper than dating and making long-distance phone calls, combined! And it's the only efficient way to book interviews for a monthly music column.

Plus, let's face it, e-mail is downright sexy.

The ineffable combination of a semi-colon, a dash and a right parenthesis – in that order – can add a knowing allure and a certain *savoir faire* that Henry Mill could not have imagined when he invented the typewriter in 1714. ;-) )

See what I mean?

And now back to the blog at hand. :-@

Crafting my column and blog would be virtually impossible without the easy and instantaneous communication that e-mail offers. It's hard to believe that I once produced a daily talk show without benefit of e-mail, the Internet or even a DOS computer!

In the stone age, I clipped from something called a newspaper, used an actual physical Rolodex and trudged to work every day through six miles of snow, sleet and 1980s adult-contemporary music.

Flash forward 2010: I get notices from Colorado Education Commissioner Dwight Jones to an e-mail address created and used exclusively for a music column.

I learned via the same e-mail account – a few days after my column about the Denver Botanic Gardens concerts hit the racks – that the upcoming concert series had experienced its first cancellation of the season.

Cuba's Los Van Van will not be playing the Gardens, as scheduled.

“The coordinators of the tour of Los Van Van regret to announce that, due to an unresolved business matter between the group and a third party and circumstances beyond their control, the U.S. tour of Los Van Van must be postponed,” an e-mail says.

Most interestingly, the e-mail clarifies, “This decision had nothing to do with U.S.-Cuba relations or any visa issues.”

From the other end of the musical universe came an e-mail from Devo, the long-lived experiment in “de-evolution” best known for its 1980 hit “Whip It!”

“DEVO Inc., and its musical division DEVO, are in need of your help,” the message pleads with touching sincerity. “In an effort to comply with the growing need for appealing sonic products in the mass market, we have officially launched the ‘Devo Song Study’ to collect data regarding which of our current roster of recorded material is most appealing to you, the general public.”

The odd press release adds this bit of kiss-up redemption:

“Of course, when we say ‘the general public’ we’re also including members of the music press and media because we want your help as well. As you know, this is an unprecedented move, and as this is your album too, we’re counting on you! Currently the band has created 16 new songs, which, at the request of corporate leadership, must be narrowed down to 12 for the official album release.”

A link at the bottom allows recipients to sift through the band’s newest material and help chart the track listing for Devo’s next CD.

Yeah, OK, right after I finish reading my Cialis spam.

The most bizarre of my recent e-mails, as far as I’m concerned, is one I’ve saved out of morbid novelty for about four months.

Did you know Fiddler’s Green is now Comfort Dental Amphitheater?

No joke, the concert venue has been renamed for a dental franchisor.

Here’s the thinking:

“Ultimately, good dental health and good overall health is what we deliver to patients. When people enjoy the music at Comfort Dental Amphitheatre, that positive feeling carries over to our brand and their next dental visit,” states Dr. Neil Norton, Comfort Dental’s vice president, in the official press announcement.

OK, first of all, nothing – not even the late Lena Horne and Nat King Cole sharing a suburban duet on the Green, for free – could make a trip to the dentist anything but pure misery, much less “comfortable.”

“Dude, Wanna go see Pearl Jam at Comfort Dental this weekend?”

Count the months until the amphitheater’s coveted naming rights give way to Walmart, AAA Plumbing or Fish Taco.

Fortunately, Fiddler’s, in Greenwood Village, is far enough from central Denver that I seldom mention the place, even in passing, in my LIFE column.

But I do brush my teeth ... after I check my e-mail.