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Subject: Re: Dr. Geddes and his review of RMAF  
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 06 Oct 2005 04:40:50 GMT  
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Regional audio shows don't bring in tens of thousands of attendees. CES and NAMM do, but the regional shows don't. The regional shows bring in a few locals and a few friends. Hundreds of people show up, not thousands. The guys that have made friends with one another in this hobby put aside some money to make a trip every year or two, make it a vacation to see one another. They do a little show and tell and enjoy each other's company. It's a club, sort of. If an exhibitor's motive is primarily mass exposure, they might consider mass marketing. It's expensive and it is not selective. It is a shotgun approach. They won't get aficionados, they'll get plenty of warm bodies to fill the seats. If profit motive is the primary drive, they can use psychoacoustics to find out what they think the public wants to hear and they can use financial experts to study what price should be set to maximize profits. Get the bankers to fund it, or do a public offering 'cause this is all big money stuff. Marketing is all about perception, making the customer believe he has the best product is more important to some companies than actually providing the best product. I've seen a few small companies try to straddle the fence. They don't want to do an IPO or anything that might "sell out" and make their small companies big and unmanageable, but they want the kind of exposure they see corporate advertisers getting. So they go to CES, get a room at a nearby hotel and tell everyone they'll be there. Seems like there's a cottage industry of small shows being parasitic to the big shows. What good comes from taking high-end hifi to a show where most people are looking at computers and televisions and iPods? It doesn't provide any more useful exposure than the regional shows, because the people that want their exclusive products aren't going to the mass market shows. The ones that do go, are going to the exclusive "appendage" of the show, not to the show itself. So it's basically tacking a niche market show onto a larger commercialized show, maybe driven by some sort of odd inferiority complex about market share or something. If you're looking for a 1931 Bugatti Royale, you don't go to wholesale auto auctions. You go to something a little more exclusive, but there aren't that many people shopping for cars like that so there will be fewer people there. What I'm getting at is the nature of high-end anything is pretty exclusive. Not everyone drives a 500HP+ car. Not everyone owns a high-end hifi, and most don't use tubes. Most people aren't pilots, and most don't collect guns, stamps, rare coins, whatever. It isn't that the niche industries are dying, it's that they never were very popular in the first place, at least not as a percentage of the total population. There may have been some impact from the hurricanes last season, but in general, I've seen a growth trend in high-end hifi. If anything, I think the high-end audio market is on the upswing. It is something that middle age men can afford, and it is something that the whole family can enjoy. Hot rods and sports cars have always been popular with most guys, but with gas prices going up, it's not as much fun to have a muscle car to take out once a week. Same with boats. They drink gas like elephants. But high fidelity systems don't cost any more to use than an incandescent light bulb. Personally, I have really enjoyed the audio shows I attended, but maybe that's because I didn't expect them to be like CES. I didn't want them to be. I like seeing all you guys there, and hearing your systems. I like going out to dinner afterwards and visiting with everyone for a few hours in the evening after-hour parties. I went to MAF in 2003, and my motive was to meet some of the friends I had made over the years by telephone contact and E-Mail correspondence, but whom I had never had the pleasure of meeting. I wanted to see Bill Martinelli, Bill Epstein, Ron Semega, George Duemm, Wayne Mark, Duke LeJeune, Mike Baker and a few dozen other people. I was absolutely thrilled to see these guys. It had the same feeling of a high school

reunion, one where we were seeing friends we hadn't seen in way too long. In this case, we were people with shared interests who had visited with one another many, many times, but never met. Last year's GPAF was wonderful, and I'm looking forward to next years event. I think we'll probably do seminars next year, like we did at MAF. I'll do the "Crossover Electronics 101" seminar, and I'm hoping Bob Brines will talk about single driver speakers and maybe talk about mass-loaded transmission lines. Maybe Earl Geddes will do a talk on home theater and room acoustics or on oblate spheroidal waveguides and high-order modes. Todd White will probably do an Altec history presentation and I'm hoping Johan Van Zyl will discuss basshorns. We'll probably have a few other industry members scheduled too. These regional shows are pretty exclusive. They're where you see the best of the best, and you visit with others that are like minded. We don't go there to make a sale, we go there to network with one another and to enjoy each other's company. If you go to RMAF, GPAF or MAF expecting to bring in 10,000 people and get a dozen new distributorships, you're going to the wrong kinds of shows. These high-end hifi shows are the places you go to see the people that are passionate about quality, not about quantity.

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