



The Most Lively Consonants in the World

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The most lively of all consonants are not single letters but the two-consonant clusters like *mp* and *nt* at the ends of words like *bump* and *jaunt* and in the middle of *banter* and *rumpus*. I call them “nasal-stops,” and there are eight important ones: MB, MP; ND, NT, NG, NK; and the NCH and NGE of *bunch* and *lunge*. These are all pairings of a “nasal” consonant *m* or *n* plus one of the plain or affricated “stop” consonants *b*, *p*, *d*, *t*, *g*, *k*, *ch*, *j*—or at least relics of such pairings, like final *-mb* and *-ng* in words like *climb* and *sing*, whose concluding stops have not been articulated since Shakespeare’s day.

The point is, nasal-stops are the party animals of the consonant world. They typically make the words containing them seem noisy (*bang!*) or big (*humongous!*) or insulting (*chump!*), and they appear again and again throughout our language in central words from those three semantic categories. Each category is discussed in its own section below. The most typical and versatile nasal-stop word is *bump*, which is cited in all three sections. Many others, like *pound*, are cited in at least two. Watch for them.

“Impact” or “Sound”

First and foremost, English uses nasal-stops onomatopoeically to represent “hitting” and “noise.” So closely related are those two ideas that some words fail to distinguish them: one can both *bang* on a drum and hear the *bang* it makes. Nasal-stops fit these percussive sounds nicely: *ping*, *clink*, *clank*, *clunk*, *bump*, *thump*, *kerchunk*. From there, nasal-stop words start branching out and specializing. A few refer to noise alone, like *sound* itself and the *rumbles* of *thunder*. Ancient India’s thunder god was called *Indra*, and Greek

for “thunder” was *bronte*. Some other noisy things are *bangles*, *boomboxes*, *bombs*, *jam-borees*, *shindigs*, *tempests*, *temper tantrums*, *rumpuses*, *cranked-up* music, *rambunctious* children, and *pandemonium*.

Other nasal-stop words concentrate on the impact rather than the noise: *punch*, *pound*, *tumble*, *stamp*, *stomp*, *trample*, *whomp*, *conks* on the head, *punts* and *bunts* and *slam-dunks*, *spanking* and *pillow-plumping*. Sexual intercourse is represented too: *humping* and *bonking* and *boinking*, *jumping each other’s bones*, and *pumping* and *banging away*. Such agitation and impact leave their traces: *rumpled* surfaces, *crumples*, *crinkles*, *jumbles*, and *dimples*. The cluster *-nch* specializes in one particular kind of agitation, “squeezing” or “grasping,” as in *cinch*, *bunch*, *munch*, *scrunch*, *pinch*, *wrench*, and *clench*. It even includes Dr. Seuss’s miserly *Grinch* (whose name cleverly begins with the *gr-* of *grasping* itself).

Some kinds of agitation are more subjective, like the *pangs* of *hunger* and *conscience*, *tingles* of anticipation, and the *rankling* of anger. A little further down this path is the whole realm of sentiment and mental activity, for just as we are *struck* by ideas and *kick* them around, we find “impact” nasal-stops invigorating words like *mind*, *intellect*, *think*, *remember*, *contemplate*, *wonder*, *ponder*, *fantasize*, *long*, and *want*. We experience *sympathy* and *angst*, have *hunches* and *inklings*, are *impressed* and *astounded*.

When impact is repeated like a *drumbeat*, it establishes a *tempo* or “rhythm” for everything from *iambic pentameter* to *mantras* and *pinball* and *Ping-Pong*. Walking or running is rhythmic too: we can *saunter*, *amble*, *scramble*, *ramble*,



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sprint, canter, gambol, slink, lumber along, *pound* the pavement, *stump* for votes, go on *jaunts* and *junkets*. More elaborately rhythmic are dances, from the basic *Bump* to a stripper's *bump and grind* to the dazzling intricacies of Latin dances and their music: *mambo, samba, limbo, rumba, conga, flamenco, charanga, tarantella, tango, fandango, merengue, mangue, timba, banda, and lambada!*

Sharing tempos with dances are styles of music like *swing* and *country, oom-pah* marches, the Bahamian *goombay* (which was named for a kind of *drum*), Cajun *chanky-chank*, African-American *funk*, and several kinds of rock: *punk, grunge, industrial, and jungle*. Playing this music are *bands* and *combos*, whose very instruments pay homage to nasal-stops with names from all over the map: *gong* from Malay, *banjo* and *marimba* from Africa, *tom-tom* from India, *cymbal* and *tympani* from Greek, *bongo* from American Spanish, *trombone* and *mandolin* from Italian, *tambourine* and *trumpet* from French. Many words for “bell” pay homage too: Latin *tintinnabulum*, Spanish and Italian *campana*, and Chinese *ling* and *zhong*. And what do bells do? They *ring, ding-dong, and ding-a-ling*. Groups of them *jingle*, tiny ones *tinkle*, and big ones go *clang* or *bong*. In much the same way, a stringed harp displays its *timbre* in a *twang*, and the human voice can *chant* or *sing*, a gift which was the basis of all our *songs* and musical *numbers* in the first place.

If music's tempo dances long enough, it becomes Time itself, Latin *tempus*. Time is flying: even *-ing*, our suffix for durative action, contains a nasal-stop, just like its equivalents in Latin and German, *-ent-* and *-end*. Multiplying the effect, the newly popular durative adjective *ongoing* has two nasal-stops, and *longstanding* has three. “For a very long time” in British slang is *for yonks* and time's farthest reaches are called the *Big Bang* and the *Big Crunch*, since even physicists instinctively grope for nasal-stops to describe time's beginning and its end. So do poets. T. S. Eliot's world vanishes “not with a

bang but a *whimper*,” while Faulkner's somehow survives even after “the last *ding-dong* of doom has *clanged* and faded.” For eventually all clangs do fade. How long the fading takes depends on how much space there was to *resound* in: the bigger the space, the more impressive the resonance. That is the connection between “sound” and the second nasal-stop specialty “size.”

“Big” or “Round”

Among our words for “big” are *long, grand, gigantic, gigundo, gargantuan, humongous, and tremendous*. Abstract size is evoked with *ample, bounty, plenty, abundant*, and such idioms as *honkin' big* and the British *thumping* and *swinging* (rhymes with *bingeing*). Sizes are measured by *pound* with its “weight” and “money” senses; denoted by *amount, extent, range, and quantity*; and specified with the help of *counting* and *numbers*, including the important decimal multiples *twenty, hundred, thousand*, and indeed *umpteenth*. Even the nasal-stop conjunction *and* implies a heaping up of things.

One kind of heap is a *mound*, which is “round” as well as big, just like a *bump, pimple, carbuncle, bunch, pumpkin, dumpling, clump, hump, bundle, tent, blimp, or mountain*. Some famously big and round animals are *bumblebees, pandas, humpback* whales, *elephants, and brontosaurus*. Of course, *round* itself is a nasal-stop word, and there are many kinds of roundness other than “convexity.” For one, “concavity,” as in *sink, tank, sump, trench, empty, and chamber*. For another, “curving motion”, which can “rotate” around like *crank, winch, wind*; “twist” like *kink, wring, wander, undulate*; or “arc” like *pendulum, swing, jump, bound, slump, and bend*. Arc-shaped surfaces are *cambered*. Geometrically round objects include not only circles like *mandala, ring, and wedding band*; but also cylinders like *wand, candle, thimble, spindle, cucumber, banger* “sausage,” and the tree parts *trunk, stump, branch, and limb*.

People have *trunks* and *limbs*, too. Indeed, we have many nasal-stop body parts, mostly cylindrical. From the ground up, we have curvy



ankles, shanks, haunches, rumps, and flanks; and at the ends of our arms (which correspond to the curving wings of birds), we have rounded hands and fingers: namely thumbs, index or pointing fingers, ring fingers, and pinkies! Male bodies furthermore sport a round member called a wang, dong, schlong, or lingam.

Besides naming the body with nasal-stops, we also appraise it with them. Convex bodies are plump, rotund, chunky, paunchy, and thunder-thighed; cylindrical bodies are slender and lanky. Gorgeous men are hunks and dreamboats, and gorgeous women are blondes, bombshells, and bimbos—“volumptuous” creatures, as a friend of mine says. Nasal-stops can even reflect body imagery through names. When Lewis Carroll’s Alice asked Humpty Dumpty if a name must mean something, he laughed: “Of course it must; my name means the shape I am—and a good handsome shape it is, too.” Big and round! Just like King Kong, Rambo, Santa, Eddie Murphy’s obese Professor Klump, Walt Disney’s elephant, Dumbo, and indeed, P. T. Barnum’s real-life elephant Jumbo, whose name has actually become a synonym for “big.”

Sometimes size is impressive and roundness comforting; but in many contexts, big things seem clunky and cumbersome, like the proverbial clumsy ox, and rounded things seem stupid or ineffective—dumb or blunt when we want them to be sharp. In other words, sometimes “big and round” loosely implies contemptible, which is the third nasal-stop specialty.

“Contemptible” or “Silly”

Like the famous “bump on a log,” inert and clumsy people often draw scorn despite themselves: *bumbling*, *blundering* fools, *lunkheads* and *dunderheads*, *chumps* and *zombies*, social *bombs* and *blunderbusses*, *frumpy* women, *fumbling* drunks, *numbskulls* and *stumblebums*, *bumpkins* and *simpletons*. Even their names are funny: Archie Bunker and Al Bundy, England’s arch-fogey Colonel Blimp, poor, well-meaning Forrest Gump, and P. G. Wodehouse’s exuberantly brainless young men, like Pongo Twistleton,

Gussie Fink-Nottle, and Bingo Little. The humorousness of nasal-stops also makes them one of the secrets of nonsense poets. The flora and fauna in Lewis Carroll’s “Jabberwocky” include a “Tumtum tree” and a “frumious Bandersnatch.” Edward Lear’s little *Jumblies* set sail for “the hills of the *Chankly Bore*” with “forty bottles of *ring-bo-ree*.” And Spike Milligan writes of a very “noisy place to belong” called the “*Ning Nang Ning Nang Nong!*”

The subjects of nasal-stop coinages need not even be big, just graceless: *ants* and *finks* and other *runts*, mosquito-bitten *grunts* soldiering along, *punks* and *tramps*, *flunkies* and *henchmen*. Some are pathetic: *spongers* who *cringe* and *whinge*, greasy *grinds*, underdogs *jinxed* even in *rinky-dink* ventures, *penny-pinchers* gloating over their *stingy* hoards, and *pompous popinjays*. Some are insincere, *unctuous* hypocrites *simpering* their *trumped-up* flatteries, and still others merely annoying: *wimps* and *wonks*, *imps* and *scamps* and *scoundrels*, *hounds* and *skunks*, *cranks* and *mugwumps*, and legions of *pinkos* and *Bible-thumpers* awash in *mumbo-jumbo*, *bunk*, and *humbug!*

Nor is nasal-stop real estate the best. *Junky* and *gunky*, *dingy* and *grungy*, reeking of *stinks* and *stenches* and other *pongs* “awful smells,” it is a wasteland of *dungeons*, *jungles*, *swamps*, and *shantytowns*. Its *boondocks* are dotted with *Podunk* villages, its suburbs are *bland* and *humdrum*, and its cities are *sinks* of sin where *honky-tonkers* dodge *bunco* squads and seek *high jinks* in *dumps* and dives with *campy* shows and *plonky* wine. Nasal-stoppers are a *raunchy* crowd, fond of *hanky-panky*: *junkies* and *gamblers*, *pimps* and *panders*, *swingers* and *philanderers*, *randy* men eyeing *wanton* women—*wenches*, *minxes*, *tramps*, and *strumpets*. Casualties are many, lost in blue *funks*, *bonkers*, and hauled off to *shrinks*; *blind*, *hunchbacked*, *limping*, *gimpy*. Others sting under epithets like *Chink*, *Bohunk*, *Sambo*, *Uncle Tom*, *honky*, *Yank*, and *gringo*.

Such terms may be scandalous, but they should be no surprise, for nasal-stop “con-



temptible” words are like weeds, an ancient species fresh in the ground every week. *Wimp* is only a few decades old, for instance, yet *wrong* goes back a thousand years, and the humble *stink*—if really traceable to primeval Nostratic **stunga*, as new research claims—has been around for a cool twelve thousand. We have been raiding the nasal-stop weed-patch for a very long time.

That concludes our tour of the salient uses of nasal-stops in English, although tours in other languages would be just as interesting. As the few foreign words cited above might suggest, nasal-stops often do the same semantic work elsewhere as they do in English. For example, in one study of native roots in Indonesian, a language totally unrelated to English, I notice that of 33 common root-fragments containing nasal-stops or plain velar nasals, 24 percent frequently appear in words meaning “impact” or “sound,” 39 percent in words meaning “round,” “curved,” “convex,” or “concave,” and 6 percent in words meaning “flawed or damaged” (Keith McCune, *The Internal Structure of Indonesian Roots*, Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Michigan, 1983, appendixes 15 and 16). Such similarity results not from coincidence but instinct. Linkages of nasal-stops to these meanings seem to be hard-wired into human brains, and you will most likely meet them anywhere you look.



SIC! SIC! SIC!

“Coming Tuesday: Ever been in a tight spot on a business trip? Had a flight canceled when you absolutely HAD to be somewhere? Wound up in a motel room only an etymologist could love? Seen your underwear riding an airport baggage carousel? Check out USA TODAY’s Business Travel Bonus Section for tales of Road Warriors’ travel nightmares and tips for coping with unforeseen curves on the road.”

[From USA TODAY, Monday, March 24, 1977.

Submitted by Steve Waldron, Bloomington, Illinois.]

Baby-san’s Lingo

D. Gordon and R. L. Spear
Tochigi-ken, Japan

The language of the bars and brothels of Yokohama during the decade or so after World War II did not have its Samuel Johnson, its Noah Webster, or its Laurence Urdang. And so, before it slips away for want of speakers, two amateurs—in both senses of the word—would like to offer to this wordly-wise constituency an initial list of its lexical items and idioms and ask that amendments be made.

What follows then is a provisional lexicon of the language of that young lady whose unsterotypical, in-your-face antics inspired the delightful “Baby-san” cartoons of Bill Hume that ran for years in the *Stars & Stripes* (Pacific edition)—her language and the language of those who came to love her.

The items offered here have been culled from the happy memories of those who, as Occupying Forces and later as Resters and Rehabitatees from Korea, wandered the safely sensual alleyways of towns from Naha to Chitose in search of . . . what? Let us say that few were disappointed in their search, nor did they come away without some fluency in the language spoken by the searchers and the sought.

Amendments will be happily and appreciatively received at rlspear@nasuinfo.or.jp.

abunai! watch out! The expression came quite naturally into the language Baby-san shared with her GI friends. It didn’t take many sequences of its use in the face of immediate danger—an oncoming taxi, a spilled drink, or an attempt to jump into an *ofuro* (which see) before testing the water—to teach a GI the meaning of this expression.

alligator [from *arigatô* “thank you”] A playful way to say “thanks.” One of many such expressions (see also *don’t touch my mustache*) where Japanese was spoken with English-sounding words. The tradition went back to the nineteenth century, when British traders in Yokohama did



things like change the polite verb ending *gozaimasu* into a slurred “God damn us.” The GIs could be ingenious at this, but all too often it was simply a case of mispronouncing Japanese. One exchange that would heard on occasion was “Alligator,”—“Crocodile,” rather than “Don’t touch my mustache.”

anone A common way to get someone’s attention. In the Japanese it was an informal expression, used in a shop to get service, now rarely used in Japanese polite conversation. (See *mushy-mushy*.) Today it carries the connotation of “Hey!” or any similar expression.

Baby-san Any free-spirited girl who entered into relationships with GIs. She was a delightfully outspoken girl whose contacts with Americans were followed by readers of *Stars & Stripes*, a publication under the command of the military, read by servicemen and women and associated civilians.



baka a fool. One of the words that every language, no matter how limited, seems to need. What would we yell at people we didn’t like if we couldn’t inform them that they were stupid? While the word was a noun, it was often treated as an adjective, as in, “Suzy-san’s boyfriend is *baka*.” Of course the absence of the *a* may be the result of its usual disappearance even before nouns in the speech of the period. “Suzy-san is butterfly.” *Baka* is one of the few Japanese words, along with *kamikaze* and *banzai*, that came into the GI’s vocabulary before the occupation.

During the war in the Pacific, the bombs that kamikaze pilots dropped were called *baka-bombs*. (See also *nobody home upstairs*.)

banjo [*benjô*] A rough-and-ready masculine word for toilet. (More often than not they were not segregated by sex.) The word was shunned by the genteel, who often replaced it with *o-tearai* (lit. “honorable hand-washing place”) or some other euphemism. The shift in pronunciation to the closest English equivalent resulted in banjo players in the military community not wanting to admit their talent.

big P.X. The way many of the girls conceived of America—the land of the Big P.X. More than one marriage was the result of a girl’s desire to live in the country where she could go into any supermarket and buy all the things that her boyfriend brought her from the P.X. It should be remembered that buying things in the P.X. and selling or giving them to a Japanese was strictly against regulations. (See also *wish book*.)

boy-san any guy, military or civilian. Waiters and the like were once summoned with this expression in Japanese. The word was *boi-san*. *Baby-san* used it more broadly to refer to or address any guy whose name she didn’t know. It also came to be used patronizingly by GIs for any Japanese male and jokingly for their buddies. It was not polite usage, both because when used by Southern white GIs it carried racist implications, and because, along with *Papa-san*, it was frequently used for a pimp.

business girl a prostitute. This was the term preferred by the girls themselves. (See also *pompom girl*.)

butterfly [See also *chocho*] a promiscuous person of either sex (with no connection to Puccini’s hero). The image of a creature that flits from flower to flower was a suitable metaphor in either language. Also a verb: “You no *butterfly* on me.” This was not an idle threat.

cheeby [*chibiko*] a small person. Like *skosh*, it could be used as a pet name.

cherry boy a virgin. A rare bird and one whose status it was for any enterprising girl to



alter, something accomplished without too much difficulty, such being the circumstances in which young men found themselves.

cherry girl a virgin. A pretty way for a girl to introduce a young friend, as in “She *cherry girl*.” Always an intriguing introduction, even if not always quite accurate.

chocho [*chôchô*] a butterfly.

choke your motor, also *Joe Demotti* [*chotto matte*] just a moment. This expression and its Japanese equivalent found their way into Baby-san’s world as a way to ask a girl on the street to wait up for you. In casual conversation it served as, “Hey, wait a minute.” While not infallible, it worked in a surprisingly large number of instances.

Debbie-chon [*debu-chan*] A playful diminutive of the Japanese word for “chubby.” Applied to anyone on the fat side and used as a nickname.

die joby (maybe spelled *Dye Joe B*) or shortened to *daijobe* [*daijôbu*] okay. This became the standard response to questions requiring approval.

dingwa [*denwa*] telephone. A playful mispronunciation, bringing together the Japan word and the noise they make in English.

dingy dingy drunk. We’ll have to take scholarly refuge here and say what the etymologists say—“unknown” or “origin obscure.”

dommy-dommy [*dame, dame*] no, bad. The word in Japanese is *dame*, but it’s often repeated in the standard language too, especially to children.

don’t touch my mustache [*dô itashimashite*] don’t mention it. The expected response to *alligator* (see above). For some reason or other, this one enjoyed great popularity among the GIs and their girls.

friendo a friend. It carried the strong suggestion of a nonsexual relationship. (See also *tomodachi*.) Interestingly enough, the Japanese use of “girlfriend” or “boyfriend” doesn’t ordinarily indicate the American connotation of a “one-and-only” or a “steady,” but only someone to go out with, with no strong romance implied.

furo and *furoba* Japanese for *bath* and *bathroom*, usually said with the polite prefix *o-*. The Japanese love of hot baths is reported in the most ancient Chinese accounts of their island neighbor.

genky [*genki*] healthy or peppy. Often used as a question to ask after someone’s health. The answer from the girls, if they were in really tip-top form was, “*Genki pari pari*.”

gohan or *gohong* [*gohan*] rice, meal, or food. Like the English word “meal,” the word *han*, ‘grain,’ with its honorific prefix *go-*, refers not only to what is eaten, but the activity of eating it. Where the GI might be planning on a quick beer before jumping into the sack, his girl might want him to order up some *gohan*.

gomen or *gomennasai* The standard Japanese for “I’m sorry.” Made popular in the late forties by a song by that title. Everyone knew “*Gomen nasai*, I’m so sorry I made you cry.”

grokey [*gurokki*] groggy. In the world of Baby-san, usually from too much drinking. The English etymology is ultimately based on *groggram*, from which a coarse coat was made. Worn by an English admiral, and known therefore as “Old Grog,” he diluted the men’s rumration with water. All a far cry from the pretty girl who shakes her head and scolds her boyfriend for being *grokey*.

hava no Generally attached to whatever it is that isn’t had, e.g., “Money *hava no*.” There’s probably an influence from Japanese grammar, where *okane motanai* carries the same idea in the same order.

hava yes If “Money *hava no*” could be used by a GI to excuse himself from paying for a girl’s company for the evening, disbelieving girls soon learned to retort with “*Usô! Money hava yes*.”

honcho [*hanchô*] a squad leader or gang boss. The word has a Japanese military origin but soon came to be applied to anyone put in charge of a detail. The word is one of the handful that have come into the general English vocabulary, where it’s often used as a verb. “Say, George,” says the CEO to his aspiring junior vice president, “how



would you like to honcho a little project I have in mind?” The spelling matches that of words like *Honda*, with the pronunciation *honcho* closer to the original than that of *Honda*, which in Japanese has an “o” sound, as in “phone.”

honey bucket any receptacle used for gathering up or collecting human waste where flush-toilets were lacking. Their presence gave an acrid smell to the country, which would come to be all but unnoticed after a few weeks, except when it was time to spread the contents of the buckets on the rice fields.

honto [*hontô*] really, truly, honestly. In the ephemeral world of the bars and houses, there was a constant need for confirmation, and one would hear girls asking their boyfriends, “*Honto?*” To which the appropriate reply was “*Honto.*” The emphatic *honto yo* had a lilt that insured its frequent use.

hooch, hoochie [*uchi*] *house* The place you shared with your *moose*. The form *hoochie*, not much heard among the GIs, is one of the two items from the period, along with *moose*, that are picked up by the most recent edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. There’s also *shack*, so we have *shack up* (which see); interestingly enough, there’s also the English *hutch*, a coop or pen for small animals, but this is probably only a coincidence.

hubba hubba Rarely during the period was this term used to express pleasure at the sight of an attractive woman, but rather as a way to get someone to hurry. (The expression itself is said to come from American flyers and their association with Chinese pilots, *hau bu hau*, Mandarin Chinese for “hello.”)

ichiban (see also *number one*) excellent, first-class. As with its English equivalent, it showed up in a variety of expressions: “You *ichiban* nice guy.” An expression of high approval. The opposite of *number ten* (which see).

Icky Buckaroo [*Ikebukuro*] a district in Tokyo whose train station served as a meeting place for guys and their girls. As with Kyoto and its pronunciation of “Coyote,” many Japanese towns

found their names regularly mangled into half-English.

Illinois gozaimas Since a GI being greeted with *ohayô gozaimasu*, “Good morning,” couldn’t help but hear the first word, literally “early,” as *Ohio*, it didn’t take long for the geographically inclined to come up with this neighboring salutation. We never heard “*Pennsylvania gozaimas.*”

inchky [*inchiki*] Japanese slang for trickery. Used by the girls as an accusatory expression and picked up by the GIs to mean the perpetrator. There may be some influence from *usotsky* (see *uso*).

itchy knee [*ichi, ni*] literally one, two. One of the word games that was sure to perk up a lagging conversation. You started counting in Japanese and then scratched your knee, or the knee of the girl you’ve just met. Some fluent speakers got as far as “*itchi knee-san, she go,*” which follows the Japanese way of counting to five. One can imagine, as one of our correspondents reports, a girl getting the nickname Itchy-Knee for a nervous habit and then, when she got up to go to the toilet, having someone count to five after her. This sort of thing was typical of the games that were played where communication was difficult.

J.N. or JN Japanese National. The official designation for those Japanese employed by the military establishment. Needless to say, it had little application in the houses and bars, but officers, more often than not, would find their *onlies* (see *only*) among the female secretaries or women who worked in the offices or P.X.s. The occupational authorities coined a number of such terms.

jig-a-jig sexual intercourse. (Some have suggested that its origin is to be found in Black slang.) *Zig-zig* is quite possibly related. Both expressions have been widespread among the military going back to the 1800s. The term found ample opportunity for use in the Japan of the occupation.

jo-san [*jô-san*] girl. A polite way to refer to or address a young woman. *O-jô-san* was even more so.

Joe Demotti [*chotto matte*] just a minute. (See



also *choke your motor*.) As such things go, this is a reasonable approximation of the Japanese and not as far-fetched as some.

kechimbo a cheapskate. Not an uncommon complaint among the girls about the men whose generosity was of vital concern. The real sports were known as “brown-baggers,” because after shopping at the postexchange (P.X.) or ship’s store, the bags often indicated items purchased for Baby-san or the hooch that one shared with his *moose* (which see).

ki o tsukete watch out! take care! Like *abunai*, an expression soon learned from context. The first meaning is cautionary, while the second is pretty much the equivalent of “So long.”

koibito lover. This Japanese word came into the vocabulary of Baby-san and her friends to refer to a more romantic relationship than a *boy friendo* or a *moose*. If a guy had a *koibito*, he was really in love.

kuru kuru pah crazy. An expression introduced by the comedian Toni Tani and soon part of everyone’s armory of insults. The word *kichigai* is a more standard word for the same thing.

Mama-san any older woman, but also the madam of a house or a bar. In Baby-san’s world, as in the red-light districts of Europe and America, *Mama-san* was the authority figure. All problems, financial or otherwise, were resolved by the girl saying, “You speak Mama-san.” (See also *papa-san*.)

meter-meter [*mite-mite*] literally look-look. A repetition of *mite*, an imperative of the verb “to see.” One can assume that the British, Australian, and New Zealander troops thought of it as *metre-metre*.

monkey house An expression used loosely for an insane asylum, a jail, or a brothel. The precise factors that related these three institutions to houses containing monkeys has yet to be thoroughly researched.

moose [from *musume*]. The plural is either *mooses* or *meese*. In Japanese the word *musume* could regularly be applied to any young girl, just as *obaa-san*, “grandmother,” could be used as a

term of address for any old woman. In the language of Baby-san’s world, however, it came to be restricted to a desirable girl. It could be applied to a partner either for the night or as an *only* (which see). “Hey, have you seen Charlie’s new moose?” meaning a particularly close relationship, usually of some duration. (See also *spoose*.)

more skosh, *more skoshy*, or *more scratch* [*mô sukoshi*] soon, or a little more. Used both for time and things. “She’ll be here more skoshy.”

more soon [*mô sugu*] soon. An expression that possessed the delightful capacity of almost sounding and meaning the same as the Japanese original.

mushy mushy [*moshi moshi*] The Japanese equivalent of hello when speaking over the telephone. It was also an informal way of getting someone’s attention, about like “Hey, you.” It became popular with a nonsense ditty sung to the tune of “London Bridge Is Falling Down.”

Mushy-mushy, anone,

Anone anone.

Mushy-mushy, anone,

Ah so deska.

nay-san [*nee-san*] literally elder sister; more politely *onay-san*. Used for any girl, but especially for a shop clerk or waitress. While the expression followed the usage of the period, it is no longer commonly used in Japanese except to refer to someone else’s older sister, or as a way of addressing your own.

ne or *nee* A particle that shows up everywhere in the Japanese of many native speakers, like the English “ya know,” and quickly found its way into the English of GIs talking with their girls. “Suzy, *ne*, we, *ne*, go movies, okay?” Also used to request assent, as the English “isn’t it” or simply to soften what would otherwise be a more positive statement: “You skoshy inchky, *ne*?” The longer form, *nee*, was regularly used to ask for agreement: “He baka, *nee*?”

neba hoppen, *neba hachi*, or *neba hachi ku ju* never happen. An expression that came out of the blending of the two languages. (See also *tonde mo nai*.) Sometimes a disdainful retort to a



request for sexual favors or simply a very negative reply to any request or the unlikelihood of something happening. The shift from *hoppen* (Japanese *happen*) to *hachi* needs a bit of explanation. Japanese has endings, called counters, that combine with numbers when things are counted, so *sammai* means three flat objects and *sambon* three cylindrical objects. The word *happen* combines *hachi* “eight” and *hen* “times” and means “eight times.” So, when Baby-san heard “happen” in English, she naturally related it to

***ol' watash* a way of referring to yourself as someone who knew what he was talking about. “Just take it from *ol' watash*.”**

the idea of eight. It didn't take her long to think up *neba hachi*, and then to go on with the joke by counting *kû*, *jû*, which, needless to say, mean “nine” and “ten,” respectively. Fortunately, this was the only place where the language got involved with matters of higher mathematics.

Neon Cotton Building Not so much an everyday word in Baby-san's lingo, but included here as an example of how cultural contact can get things garbled. At the end of the war, all but the port area of Yokohama had been leveled by bombing raids. The AFFE airstrip ran through what is now central Yokohama. The port facilities, however, were not bombed, the strategy being to leave them intact to facilitate the eventual occupation. Even today, the area along the bay from North Pier to Yamashita Park is a museum of prewar architecture. One of the buildings left standing, across from the government buildings for Kanagawa prefecture, is the Nippon Koton Birudingu, the offices for the Nippon Cotton Company, with its name on a plaque at the door in Japanese. It was this building that was selected by the occupation forces for the headquarters of Camp Yokohama. Anyone with business at headquarters went to what had to be called the Nihon Koton Building, since *Nippon* was a word prohibited by the occupation in its efforts to cleanse the Japanese language of nationalistic words. The shift to *Neon*, a one hundred percent American

word, was made immediately by the average GI and by the fifties every one, including the camp commander, said *Neon Cotton Building*.

never happen The GI's pronunciation of *neba hoppen* above. He usually didn't get involved with the arithmetic complexity of the expression.

number one or *namba-wan* the best (See also *ichiban* and *number ten*.) It comes from the Japanese construction for the superlative degree, e.g., *Are wa ichiban ii desu*, “That's the best”—literally “That's number one.” In Baby-san's world it

was used in such expressions as, “That's number one” or as a modifier, “That's a number-one idea.”

number-ten or *numba-ten* the worst. The opposite of *number-one* (which see). Used as the ultimate put-down. “He number ten!” The Japanese equivalent, *jûban*, was sometimes used as a joke, but in the standard language the word had no such negative meaning.

o- a polite prefix in Japanese. It showed up, often without the GI noticing, in such important words as *ocha*, “green tea,” *ofuru*, “bath,” and one of Baby-san's favorite, *okane*, “money.”

ol' watash a way of referring to yourself as someone who knew what he was talking about. “Just take it from *ol' watash*.”

only one's sweetheart. The expression was applied to monogamous, or nearly monogamous, relationships but in most cases suggested firm financial support of the girl you were “shacking up” with for her willingness not to *butterfly*.

papa-san old man. Applied generally to older men, but ironically in Baby-san's world the term was used for the men who did the sweeping up around the bar; although sometimes, as with *boy-san*, the term was used when addressing a pimp. There were, of course, men behind the scenes who controlled the bars and houses (often, though not always, part of the underworld), but they rarely made their presence known to Baby-san's world. (See also *mama-san*.)



pistol or *pisto* From the English “pissed off,” with more than one guy using it without knowing its origin. A girl would ask, “You *pisto*?” to which the reply, if you weren’t angry, was, “Die joby,” or the more expansive, “Me no *pisto*.” If angry, a curt “Me plenty *pisto*,” indicated profound displeasure.

pom pom a prostitute. Said by some to be of Chinese origin and by others to be brought from the Philippines with the first occupation forces, it always kept an edge of insult, unlike the preferred *business girl*, a euphemism of sorts. Then again, the term may be echoic for the sound of various rapid-fire automatic weapons and translatable as a sexual metaphor.

samo-samo or, perhaps to better suggest the pronunciation, *same-o same-o* the same. After a hard day’s duty, if a guy was met by his moose at the door with, “How your day go, Honey?” a reasonable response would be, “*Samo-samo*.”

-san a polite suffix for both sexes, meaning Mr., Mrs., or Miss, as the case may be.

shikata ga nai or *shiyō ga nai* it can’t be helped. So expressive of the country’s mood for the first few years after the war that it became a part of everyone’s language. Not surprisingly, the expression is much less heard today, but in the fall of 1945 Japan was the *shikata-ga-nai* country. Yet it still expresses a certain fatalism or passiveness on the part of the Japanese when faced with anything unpleasant, such as political skuldugery or financial wrongdoing.

skivvy [*sukebe*] horny. The pronunciation of the Japanese, which is a noun meaning something closer to “satyr,” was close enough—and the feeling located near enough—to the U.S. Navy word for underwear, for *skivvy* to serve as the catch-all for whatever erotic sensations propelled the guy to do anything overly sexual. A hand placed on a girl’s knee could trigger the complaint, “*Sukebe boy-san, nee*,” which in most circles was said in jest and could be easily countered with “Me no *skivvy*,” or some such witty riposte.

skivvy honcho a Lothario. (See also *honcho*.) Given the economic base of the community

LIGHT

A Quarterly of Light Verse

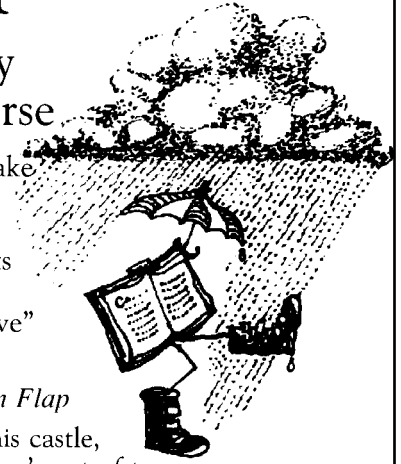
Summer storms make great reading, in the magazine that regularly prints work by “the best unserious poets alive” (X. J. Kennedy).

Throne Room Flap

Man’s home is his castle,
But when the king’s out of town,
There’s no throne room hassle—
The seat’s always down.

—PAT D’AMICO

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shared by the guys and girls, this was not altogether an insulting term.

skosh and *skoshy* [*sukoshi*] a little, a few, small. With *taksan*, the best remembered of the words from the period. One could get “a *skosh* tired,” have “*skoshi* money,” or comment that a girl “was *skoshi*.” The word was also used, like the more accurate *cheeby*, as a pet name for a short girl. (See also *more skosh*.)

slicky and *slicky boy-san* a thief. A surprisingly rare creature in Baby-san’s world. In the early days of the occupation, when life in Japan was lived at the barest subsistence level, thievery was not uncommon, but as things got back to normal in the fifties, the expression, with the war-induced poverty it reflected, moved across the Sea of Japan to Korea.

spoose [*spouse* + *moose*] one’s Japanese wife. A happy blend with some linguistic ingenuity.

sticky [*suteki*] pretty. Used by the girls for such things and dresses and jewelry and by the guys for the girls.



stinko drunk. Sometimes the slang was a two-way street, with English and Japanese drawing upon each other.

suck a hachi [*shakuhachi*] By a playful twist of cross-cultural fate, a *shakuhachi* is a rather large, straight-blown, bamboo flute. It didn't take long for guys to make jokes on the word with the girls and for it to come on base as a conveniently obscure insult. "Hey, Buddy, *suck my hachi!*"

toe, knee, cock [*tonikaku*] A silly joke that often went over the heads of the R&R GI, but one of the games played in the bars and houses. The expression *tonikaku* in Japanese means something like "be that as it may." But if your girl was to point to your toe, then your knee, and finally your crotch, and recite the word *tonikaku* slowly, the results could well be side-splitting laughter by all the girls within earshot.

taksan [*takusan*] a lot, many, much. With *skosh*, one of the few expressions from the period to come into the English of those associated with the military. While in Japanese the word is an adverb, it came to be used as often as not as an adjective by the guys: "*Taksan* money hava no."

tomodachi or *tomodach* friend. Like *friendo*, it suggested a nonsexual relationship.

tonde mo happen A blend of *tonde mo nai*, below, and *neba happen*.

tonde mo nai never happen.

uchi [*uchi*] (See *hooch*.) While *hooch* was used regularly by the GIs, *uchi* had a more sedate tone to it and gave the impression of being really settled in.

uso [*uso*] a lie. When one tried to make up a plausible explanation for getting home at two, one's moose's reply would most likely be, "*Uso!*" The perpetrator of an *uso* was an *usotsky*, from *usotsuki*, though the implication was not quite so damning as "liar," but worse than a "fibber." To fit more comfortably into the sound patterns of English it usually was pronounced more like *usutsy*.

usotsky (See above.)

watash, *watashi* (See also *ol' watash*.) When the zipper of one's moose's skirt got stuck, a gentleman would say, "*Watash'll* fix it."

wish book the Sears & Roebuck catalog. (See also *big P.X.*) A favorite pastime for many girls was looking through the catalog for things that during the occupation were things that could be theirs only in dreams.

yo An intensifier to add emphasis to a statement. It showed up in such often-used expressions as, "Baby-san need new dress, *yo*."

Contributors

We would like to say *alligator* to the following people for lending us a hand: Robert H. Beveridge, Vince Collins, Dick Flint, Ted Fowler, Robert L. Frazier, Stanley C. Frazier, Jr., S. K. Grove, Lee P. Harris, Richard Howell, Violet M. Hoyt, Robert J. Longfellow, Elsa Luber, Vern Luber, Steve McClure, Wayne McWilliams, Harry F. Miller, Edward Quackenbush, James P. A. Robbins, Thomas Robinson, John C. Scafe, Tom Scully, Delores M. Smith, Robert J. Sweeny, R. M. Tvede, William J. Tyler, Robert J. J. Wargo, and David A. Young.

And a special word of thanks to Richard Howell, professor of anthropology, University of Hawaii at Hilo, who took time from his research project in Japan to talk to us about our project and make available several useful papers on relevant topics.



SIC! SIC! SIC!

From a panel about using solar viewers to watch the solar eclipse:

"Check the lenses for damage anyway, as the slightest blemish can allow too much light through. Check for defects by holding them up in front of a 100W bulb in a darkened room—no light should come through and the only thing you should see is a faint bulb filament." [*From the Radio Times, 7–13 August 1999. Submitted by Tony Hall, Aylesbury.*]





HORRIBILE DICTU

Mat Coward
Somerset, Britain

“I just can’t describe it. There’s no other word for it,” said a man on TV the other day, giving his reaction to some disaster or other, and neatly demonstrating the functionalist view of clichés—that form should be determined by use, rather than by aesthetic considerations. A few weeks later, a vulcanologist speaking on a BBC radio show employed cliché less successfully. “Science is not a precise . . .” he said, lapsing into silence as he realised that the only possible word with which he might end his sentence was—*science*.

Robert S. Wachal of Iowa e-mailed to tell us of two of his pet peeves. (I’m most grateful to all those who have written concerning what almost all of them call “pet peeves.” This column extends an open invitation to readers to enlarge on matters discussed here, or to raise others, via either of VERBATIM’S addresses; but perhaps we could do with a new phrase to replace *pet peeves*?) Professor Wachal has noticed TV weather forecasters promising that “the rainfall will be light in nature”—as opposed, he wonders, to the rainfall in the studio? He is also fed up with, “At this point in time,” which he describes as “that redundant Watergate holdover.” In Britain, we suffer from the obviously related “At this *moment* in time.”

Irritation engulfs Julie May of Los Angeles when she hears traffic reporters on the radio advising drivers to “transition to the 10 at . . .” but admits that she “can’t remember how they used to say it.” This is a common problem; I abhor those two favourites of the consumer show, *factsheet* and *hotline*, but struggle to suggest pithy alternatives.

“*Out of* has come to mean *in* for many people who don’t seem to detect a vast contradiction of terms,” writes Donald E. Schmiedel of Las Vegas, who suspects that this ugly redundancy originated in sports talk; or indeed, that it originated *out of* sports talk. The usage “Our Custo-

mer Satisfaction Service is based out of London” is becoming common in this country, too, though I hope we might resist for a little longer its latest mutation, which Mr Schmiedel heard on CBS news: “Much of the recovery effort has been *centered out of* Otis Air Force Base.”



Ivan Brunetti

In the United States, as in the United Kingdom, politicians are keen to be seen espousing *family values*—even (or perhaps especially) after their own private lives have been exposed as being “centred around” extrafamilial fun. A *family restaurant*, Sara K. Davis of Pennsylvania tells me, is one which doesn’t serve alcohol, where *family-friendly* is code for ‘*children OK*’ or ‘*beware children*,’ depending on one’s point of view.” More recently, she notes, family has become an all-purpose “buzzword” adopted by those of conservative political and religious views; a *family-friendly library*, apparently, is one which has been purged of books which do not actively promote family values. (A less euphemistic description, it occurs to me, might be *empty library*.)

Mr Schmiedel’s mention of sports talk reminds me that I would love to hear from readers eager to unburden themselves of athletic abominations. As always, I seek the meaningless, the overused, the misused, the muddled, and the maddening—all of which seem to be extraordi-



narily well represented in the world of games.

Only today I heard a snooker commentator describe a perfect shot as “Wonderful! He didn’t make any margin of error there!” Then there was the journalist who previewed the announcement of a team selection by exclusively revealing that “few surprises are expected,” or the South African cricket administrator who promised, “There’ll be an opportunity in London behind closed doors for an honest and open discussion on the issue.” No doubt they held their open discussion behind closed doors in order to minimise the risk of unexpected surprises.

(Please contact me at either VERBATIM address, to tell me of your own least favourite Horribiles or to comment on those I’ve already discussed.)



EPISTOLA

Every time I come across the word *aftermath* (literally, the second mowing of what remains from prior) I get an urge to create the opposite, using the same stem, i.e., *foremath*, *premath*, *antemath*, etc. But you have some reference books there: do they say anything? Or maybe you will devise some suitable form. In fact, I don’t know what I would say as a synonym using other stems or forms: the *pre-state*? the *original condition*? I run out of ideas. Send a few kind words!

Continued good wishes,

John R. Krueger
by email

CORRIGENDA

A friend pointed out, much to my chagrin, that I erroneously credit “Stan Cartman” with having an Aunt Flo in the menstruation euphemisms article in VERBATIM XXV/1. There is no Stan Cartman on *South Park*—Stan’s last name is Marsh, and Cartman’s first name is Eric. I got only the Stan part right.

Jessy Randall

Five Legislations

Thirty days hath September:

strictly, of course, the phases of the moon do not reflect how many days, or nights; strictly, indeed, letting the moon dictate the months would give us thirteen in the year. Unworkable! Instead, we have twelve months, more or less equal, and September happens to have got thirty days. No problem. Oh, and there was one year when eleven went to make us equal with the continent.

I before E except after C:

we all agree this shall be true.

The rebel words that do not spell that way are weird and few.

Oh, and some French-descended words as well—leisure, seize, and such affairs—the problem’s theirs.

*How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which kings or laws can cause or cure,*
wrote Johnson. That, I think, sums up my feeling of why there’d be no mileage in repealing the law that says your age is fixed at birth, the one that bans cold liquids from congealing, the one that stipulates the height of ceiling for footpaths. Would the benefits be worth all the upheavals that would send us reeling?

The pen is mightier than the sword,

which is why pens cost fifteen hundred pounds from licensed dealers, lessons in their use do not come cheap, and ownership is taxed at eighty pounds a year, while swords are freebies from charities and banks. Oh, and I worry when kids leave school functionally unfenced.

Poetry is a verdict, not an occupation,
said Leonard Cohen. Tough, like science: not the law’s unacknowledged legislation but its appliance.

—Adrian Baker



CLASSICAL BLATHER

Getting Out the Vote

Nick Humez
 argentarius@juno.com

Here it comes again: the quadrennial paroxysm by which Americans choose their next president, and in which perhaps a few members of Congress ride in on the victorious candidate's coattails.¹ We steel ourselves for the blizzard of campaign literature stuffed under our doors, the full-page spreads in the newspapers, the natterings of negativism on radio and television.² Some of us wonder aloud if it wouldn't be better to hold more frequent elections—with a time limit on campaigning, as is the case with British *by-elections*.³ There are angry murmurs about the wastefulness of campaign expenses, which have made national office for the most part attainable only by the very rich. And a shockingly high number of us will not vote at all, convinced that the choice we'll finally be offered will be between Tweedledum and Tweedledee.⁴

In part this dysphoria stems from our having become accustomed to thinking of our political system in dualistic terms,⁵ from British Tories and Whigs (nowadays, Conservatives and Labourites), through Loyalists and Patriots, Republican-Democrats and Federalists, and so on down to today's Republicans and Democrats.⁶ Indeed, third-party candidates are often labeled spoilers, who just serve to pull votes away from the major-party candidate least unlike them, as when Ross Perot's Reform Party candidacy helped, by default, to elect Bill Clinton president in 1992 by attracting voters who would otherwise have supported the Republican standard-bearer, George Bush.⁷

Third parties succeed, even if only in a small way, when they provide a focus for the dissatisfaction of the electorate with how the major parties are managing—or bungling—a particular burning issue of the day; in consequence, such

parties tend to be relatively narrow in focus, and their nicknames often reflect this. The problem of slavery spawned *Free-Soilers* in the decades preceding the Civil War; the same period saw a surge of nativist backlash against immigration (particularly Irish) and the formation of the American Party,⁸ popularly called *Know-Nothings* from their adherents' standard response ("I know nothing") to inquiries about their leaders or the political structure of their movement. Other ephemeral limited-agenda parties have included the *Prohibitionists*, the *Greenbackers*, and the *Populists*,⁹ as well as a splinter group of Democrats called the *Locofocos*¹⁰ and a faction within the Republicans called *Mugwumps*.¹¹

The 20th century in America saw a proliferation of third parties on the Left, including the Socialists, the Communist party (also known as CP-USA, whose perennial presidential candidate, well into his eighties, was Gus Hall), the Youth International party (or Yippies, best remembered for their role in enlivening the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago and the concomitant clashes with police in the streets), the Black Panther Party, the Socialist Workers' party, and a gaggle of other small, squabbling, radical urban factions.¹² Despite repeated defeats in presidential elections, third parties have occasionally enjoyed substantial successes on the state level, as when a number of representatives to the Vermont legislature were elected in the 1970s and 1980s from that state's Liberty Union Party, reinforcing the old saw, "All politics is local."¹³

In America's cities for much of the 19th and 20th centuries, local politics meant machine politics. The classic machine was Tammany Hall in New York City, which began in 1789 as a fraternal benevolent organization much like the Elks, Eagles, or Odd Fellows, called the Society of Saint Tammany, after a legendary Delaware chieftain. By the 1840s, Tammany's Manhattan clubhouse (the "wigwam") had become the de facto headquarters of the Democratic Party, its power self-perpetuating thanks to the organiza-



tion's ability to deliver *patronage*: jobs for the loyal constituents who had worked to ensure that the party's people got into office and stayed there.

It is easy to dismiss a man such as George Washington Plunkitt—the Tammany politician whose “Very Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics” were recorded by a newspaper reporter, William L. Riordon, and published as the book *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall* in 1905—as merely a successful *ward heeler* risen to *ward boss*. Born in one of Manhattan's poorest Irish-immigrant ghettos in 1842, Plunkitt died a millionaire 82 years later, enriched by what he cheerfully calls “honest graft,” from knowing where the city had to buy watershed rights and investing in rural acreage in the right place at the right time or buying up paving stones as a sole bidder at a low price and reselling them to the other bidders he had persuaded to keep their mouths shut at the auction. He claimed, “If my worst enemy was given the job of writin’ my epitaph when I’m gone, he couldn’t do more than write: ‘George W. Plunkitt. He Seen His Opportunities and He Took ’Em.’”

Not everyone could be a Plunkitt (much less a Boss Tweed). But in an era before Social Security and civil service, the machine served to reward its adherents while providing desperately needed social services to the widow, the orphan, the worker crippled by pre-OSHA factory machinery and callously sacked, the new immigrant, and the elderly—all those whom the exuberant free market of unbridled robber-baron capitalism left to fend for themselves. In 1888, when New York City contained only Manhattan and part of the Bronx, whoever won the elections could count on distributing no fewer than 12,000 municipal jobs; at the peak of its power just a few decades later, New York City's Democratic organization had over 30,000 ward heelers and party administrators, most of them very busy men. Has a widow no coal in her scuttle tonight?

Never fear, one of the lads will bring some around, compliments of the ward boss. Have some tenants been burned out of their tenement? A Tammany district captain will take them to a hotel, get them some clothes, see to it that they are fed, and arrange for temporary housing until they can find and furnish their new apartments.¹⁴ Reformers repeatedly argued that the price of this system was corrupt city government—honest graft was still, after all, graft—but it would be hard to prove conclusively that today's social remedies for the perils of urban life, beset as they are with Parkinsonesque bureaucracies and a litigious climate, work with significantly greater efficiency than did the tight organizations of these Robin Hoods of the ballot box.

“A politician's first duty is to get elected.”¹⁵ *Stumping*—derived from the days when campaigning included speeches to rural constituents on freshly cleared land, using a stump as a rostrum—means long days and nights on the road, taking to the *hustings*,¹⁶ making *whistle-stops*,¹⁷ and putting in appearances at county fairs, parades, local *caucuses*,¹⁸ and meetings of special-interest groups, both to *press the flesh* and to provide *photo ops* for the *boys on the bus*.²⁰ To do this, one needs *fire in the belly*,²¹ the overpowering desire to win the office sought; even then, one's campaign must develop the *big mo*²²—if it is to get the candidate past merely being nominated at a convention as a *favorite son* only to be ignored on the next ballot.²³ For the fortunate who get the party's nomination, months of *barnstorming* lie ahead,²⁴ often including some fence-mending with former primary opponents. Once in office, there will be *logrolling* to accomplish one's goals,²⁵ and *filibustering* to frustrate the goals of one's opponents²⁶—and for legislative representatives faced with redistricting, some *gerrymandering* to help keep one's seat when election time rolls around again.²⁷

Notes:

1 The coattail metaphor is self-evident when one recalls that the most formal attire requires top hat and swallowtail coat. *Coattails* should not be confused with



shirtsleeves, newspaper slang for the tags at the end of stories, which describe who the authors are and what claim to expertise they are making.

2 The description of press critics of the White House policy on the prosecution of the Vietnam War as “nattering nabobs of negativism” was one of the few memorably clever utterances of Richard Nixon’s vicepresident, Spiro T. Agnew, before the latter resigned from office to face prosecution in his native Maryland for abuses committed when he was governor.

3 *By-elections* are so called because they are special elections, e.g., held to elect a member of Parliament when a seat falls vacant, as opposed to the general elections held when a party falls from power.

4 The identical twins of Lewis Carroll’s *Through the Looking-Glass* were prefigured in John Byrom’s satirical sextain, published in 1773, about the relative virtues of the composers Georg Friedrich Handel and Giovanni Battista Bononcini, which concluded with the couplet “Strange! that such high dispute should be/Twixt Tweedledum and Tweedledee.” Martin Gardner (*The Annotated Alice*, World/Forum: 1960) expressed uncertainty as to whether the famous nursery rhyme preceded this poem or was derived from it.

5 Indeed, a widespread penchant for dualism has been commonly noted in feminist critiques of the dominant male culture of Western civilization. See, e.g., the numerous index entries for “Dichotomies” in Canadian philosopher Lorraine Code’s excellent book of essays, *Rhetorical Spaces* (Routledge: 1995).

6 Or as the irascible cartoonist Al Capp, creator of the long-lived (New Deal through Vietnam) *Lil Abner* comic strip, used to call them, Republicrats and Demmicans—astutely capturing the essence of an electoral process which favors regression toward the mean.

7 In similar fashion, Theodore Roosevelt’s second run for the White House as the candidate of the Progressive Party, which had splintered from the Republicans, succeeded only in ensuring the election of the Democratic candidate, Woodrow Wilson, in 1912, foiling the reelection bid of Roosevelt’s friend and presidential successor, William Howard Taft.

8 In terms of the real native Americans—that is, the Indians—this was a misnomer, since the Native American Party, as it was first called, was specifically designed to further the dominance of citizens who were themselves descended from the immigrants of an earlier generation. The party’s reputation for secrecy in its formative years stemmed in part from its connection with several underground societies, including the Order of United Americans and the Order of the Star-Spangled Banner.

The American Party profited from the disintegration of the Whigs over abolition, only to be split apart on the same issue after the success of its southern recruitment

strategy backfired at a meeting of its steering committee in Philadelphia in 1855, at which party members from slave states managed to get a platform resolution passed which endorsed the continuation of slavery. Anti-slavery members then defected to the Republican Party, which had been formed in 1854 as a coalition of Whigs and Democrats who had bolted from their respective parties in opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Act passed that year by Congress, and which unsuccessfully fielded its first presidential candidate, John C. (“Pathfinder”) Frémont, in the 1856 election.

9 The Greenback Party was formed after the Panic of 1873 to advocate a greater money supply (and thus inflation) as a solution to farm debt; the farmers’ coalition with labor helped to elect 14 representatives to Congress in 1878, but the party was defunct by 1884. The Populists began as a scattering of so-called Farmers’ Alliances triggered by the same bank panic and formally became a party at a convention in 1892, garnering more than a million votes for former Greenbacker James Weaver as their presidential hopeful that year, after both the Democrat and Republican conventions had waffled on the money-supply question. But in 1896 the Democrats, who had included in their platform a call for the free coinage of silver, managed to siphon off much of the Populist vote for their (unsuccessful) candidate, William Jennings Bryan, still remembered for his keynote “Cross of Gold” speech, delivered during that campaign.

10 So called because they split from the New York City Democratic establishment at a meeting in 1835, during which they voted the Tammany nominee for chairman out of office, the regulars retaliating by turning off the illuminating gas for the hall. Undaunted, the insurgents continued the meeting by the light of candles and self-igniting patent “locofoco” matches. In early 1836 they formed a new party called the Friends of Equal Rights, and defeated Tammany candidates in the April elections. However, the original dispute, over the chartering of state banks, was largely resolved by action taken under the administration of Martin Van Buren, in which Tammany Hall acquiesced; so the Locofocos allowed themselves to be reabsorbed into the mainstream of the New York Democratic Party by the end of the following year.

11 The Mugwumps refused to support the 1884 candidacy of Maine presidential aspirant James G. Blaine against Grover Cleveland, in defiance of party solidarity. (It was during this campaign that Horace Porter famously remarked that “a *mugwump* is a person educated beyond his intellect.”) *Mugwump* has thus come down as a generic epithet for one who refuses to take sides. A clever but spurious etymology suggests that it meant a fence-sitter because “his *mug* is on one side and his *wump* on the other.” In fact, the derivation is from *mug-guomp*, a native Massachusetts word meaning “war leader,” and was used by John Eliot, the Puritan “Apostle to the Indians,” to gloss



“centurion” in the book of Acts in his Algonkian translation of the Bible. This is consistent with the secondary meaning offered by *Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*: a political boss or big shot.

12 A phenomenon sharply satirized by the British comedy troupe Monty Python’s Flying Circus in the recruitment scene from its film *The Life of Brian*. One such party occupied a storefront across from an apartment I rented for some years in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The William Z. Foster Bookstore, as it was called, served as the headquarters of the “Central Committee of Marxist-Leninists (U.S.),” a Maoist microparty whose members’ dedication was inversely proportional to its numbers. In 1976, on the day Mao died, the bookstore posted a large sign in the window saying, “Mao Zedong Will Live Forever!” But having had an opportunity to sleep on it, the committee put up a new sign the next day reading [*italics mine*] “Mao Zedong Thought Will Live Forever!” Though at first embarrassed by the revisionism implicit in China’s subsequent trial of the Gang of Four, C.C.M.–L. (U.S.) soon found a new well-spring of ideological purity and began posting broadsheets reading “Follow Closely Comrade Enver Hoxha,” at that time the “proletariat’s dictator” in Albania. The bookstore closed its doors a few months later and was replaced by a used-furniture shop.

13 Another sign of Vermont’s robust Left is its current representative in the U.S. House, Bernie Sanders, who served several terms as a socialist mayor of Burlington and is now the sole member of Congress unaffiliated with either major party. States whose present governors are neither Republican nor Democrat include Minnesota (ex-wrestler Jesse Ventura, Reform Party) and Maine (former public-TV host and businessman Angus King, Independent). Maine also has a small but active Green Party, formed on the analogue of the Green parties of Germany and elsewhere, which have enjoyed a more meaningful share of power than have smaller parties in the United States because of the pluralism (i.e. nondualism) normal to the coalition-government politics of most European parliamentary democracies.

The origin of “All politics is local” is shrouded in the smoke-filled rooms of urban ward politics; but for at least three generations it has certainly been a favored maxim among Massachusetts politicians, including the late Thomas P. (“Tip”) O’Neill, Jr., former speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives.

14 These are actual examples cited by Riordon in his description of a day in Plunkitt’s life as the final chapter of *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall*, which was republished by Dutton in 1963. For a fascinating and vivid description of a similar system at work in the building of an organized-crime empire, see the description of Don Vito Corleone’s youth in Mario Puzo’s 1969 bestselling book, *The Godfather*.

15 This is another one of those saws whose origin nobody knows; it was still being commonly repeated by political pundits in Massachusetts during my (1950s) childhood.

16 According to *Picturesque Expressions: A Thematic Dictionary* (Gale Research: 1980), *hustings* means “the platform from which political speeches are made; earlier it specifically meant the platform from which candidates for the British parliament stood for nomination. Its oldest antecedents are the Norse word for an assembly hall of a king, from which the term came to be applied to assembly meetings in general.”

17 So called from the days when candidates toured the country by train, making speeches from the rear platform of a parlor car wherever the steam engine might stop to take on more water.

18 A caucus is a meeting of local members of a political party to choose a candidate or delegates to a convention; it can also refer to a group within a party charged with making policy, e.g., the Democratic Congressional Black Caucus. The term grew out of the (1760s) Caucus Club of Boston, whose name may in turn have been taken from medieval Latin *caucus*, “drinking vessel.”

19 *Pressing the flesh* is handshaking, and by extension the kind of close-up face time every candidate is expected to put in; thanks to refined notions of public health, kissing babies is no longer de rigeur, and handlers have evolved a technique for gripping as far up toward the wrist as possible in order that an especially strong constituent will not crush the upper phalanges bones of the candidate’s hand.

20 Photo opportunities are vital to press coverage; the *boys on the bus* are the press corps, which generally follows the candidate’s own motorcade on a rented tour bus of its own.

21 I am indebted for this phrase to my fellow contributor Paul Sampson (“Airspeak,” VERBATIM XXIV:1 [Winter 1999]), who adds that it is “one of my least favorite political metaphors. Who decided that dyspepsia is a political virtue?”

22 Momentum. My thanks to David Weinstock of Vermont for calling this term to mind.

23 Favorite-son candidacies are those in which a particular state or region will advance its local hero out of courtesy, and usually without serious expectation of victory. Occasionally, however, a favorite son can become a *dark horse*, to whom the nomination falls when the party cannot otherwise agree to support one of the more famous contenders. This was notably the case at the Democratic convention of 1844, at which James K. Polk, a former governor of and congressman from Tennessee, was persuaded to run for president after the convention deadlocked over the candidacies of Martin Van Buren and Lewis Cass. Polk went on to win a slim victory in the national election and proved, to everyone’s surprise, to be an able president.




24 A term derived from the early days of flight, originally referring to stunt aviators and parachute jumpers who toured the countryside exhibiting their skills as county fairs and carnivals.

25 Logrolling, like the quilting bee, was a rural activity requiring multiple participants; groups of men would get together to move cut timber to a common place for burning or sawing up into lumber. "You roll my log and I'll roll yours" came into use as a standard political metaphor for trading votes and favors as early as the start of the 19th century.

24 Originally a French word for "pirate," *flibustier* entered English as *filibuster* ("rover, traveler"), and was used first to designate privateers in the 17th-century Caribbean, and later as a term for gangs of Americans who went to Central American republics with an eye to fomenting revolution. From this irregular activity derived the congressional use of the term *filibustering* for the presentation of long speeches in relays by a minority hoping to block a vote by prolonging debate until the majority gave up, since a two-thirds vote is required to invoke *cloture*, forcing an end to discussion and the calling of the question.

In the early days of civil rights legislation this tactic was much favored by *Dixiecrats*, who were (as Alabaman Anne Armentrout reminds me) the conservative southern Democrats in the coalition put together under Franklin D. Roosevelt, many of whom would go on to switch party affiliation in the Reagan years when it became clear that the Republicans were positioning themselves as the party of the right wing, and the ancient hatred of the G.O.P. stemming from Reconstruction had finally faded enough to allow political realism and ideological sympathy to take over.

27 So named from Elbridge Gerry, a congressional representative from Massachusetts who managed to have his district redrawn to his specifications, shortly after the American War of Independence. One political colleague referred to its long, twisting path comprising the coastal communities up Boston's North Shore as looking like a salamander, to which another quipped, "You mean a Gerry-mander," and the name stuck. The *g* in Gerry is hard, but in *gerrymander* it is almost always pronounced soft. Gerrymandering may sometimes be favored even by a *lame duck*—an incumbent who is not going to stand for reelection—as a means of keeping the seat safe for another member of his or her party.



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EPISTOLA

Mr. Girsch's excellent review (VERBATIM XXV/2) is marred by misuse (I believe) of one key word: *transliterate*. You cannot transliterate ideographs (*kanji*) because there are no literae to "trans." I believe the correct term is *phonetic writing*. This probably applies equally to the two Japanese phonetic "scripts": katakana and hiragana, since they are syllabic. I receive Japanese scientific publications which I cannot read, but depend on the abstracts, all in English, as are the illustration and graph legends. Mr. Girsch is, of course, a distinguished expert, and I would ask him why the Japanese do not use more katakana. Their scientific articles, mostly in kanji, have large amounts of katakana and frequent English, and occasional German and French, scientific terms which stand out clearly from the texts. This letter is for clarification, not to seriously criticize his excellent review of *Japan Style Sheet*.

Yours sincerely,

David H. Spodick, MD, DSc
Professor of Medicine (Cardiology)

University of Massachusetts Medical School





As the Word Turns

Some High and Low Cs

Barry Baldwin
Calgary, Alberta

You won't find *capernosity* in any dictionary. It crops up in Irish playwright Brendan Behan, quoted in his brother Brian's memoir, *Brendan Behan's Island* (1962): "My grandmother was a woman of capernosity and function. She had money and lay in bed all day, drinking porter or malt, taking pinches of snuff, and talking to the neighbours."

The word looks confectioned from the old and rarely used *capernoity* and *capernoited*, both variously spelled. Noun and adjective denote a head slightly fuddled with drink. Between them they began life in 1719 and vanish after 1853. The five texts they appear in are all Scottish. This couplet from the ballad *Whistle Blinkie* (*Scottish Songs*, series 2, 1853) would have been agreeable to the bibulous Celt Behan: "Of the spark aquavivae they baith lo'ed a drappie/And when capernutie then aye unco happy." Or he might have remembered "capernoited maggots and nonsense" in chapter 2 of Sir Walter Scott's *Redgauntlet*.

Still, granny does not sound fuddled with drink, so maybe Behan's neologism also owes a debt to *capere*, the Latin for "goat," an animal associated by the Romans with large appetite, wrinkled skin, and rank smelliness. Behan, like Sean O'Faolin and other Irish writers, was Jesuit-educated and knew his classics.

Clitoris scrapes into *Oxford*, though by 1989 standards its definition is decidedly starchy: "A homologue of the male penis, present, as a rudimentary organ, in the females of many of the higher vertebrates." Only four examples are given, all from scientific textbooks (1615, 1650, 1836, 1871).

I've found a passage showing its use in non-technical 18th-century prose. In his *Tour of the Continent* (1756), Thomas Pennant saw in Leiden University's anatomy school "several skeletons and prepared bodies, one of a woman with a Clitoris very apparent."

Why no quotations from erotic fiction? It's true that Henry Miller doesn't seem to use *clitoris*, not even in the priapic prose of *Tropic of Capricorn* (1939)—perhaps like many men, old Henry couldn't find it. The word must be all over the shop in sexy novels. One easy source was Terry Southern's seminal sixties shocker, *Candy*, often abbreviated to *clit*.

Clitoris comes almost unchanged from Hellenic *kleitouris*—the Latin *landica* had no impact on English. In Greek, it acquired the secondary meaning of "gem," hence the Victorian euphemism *pearl*, the reason why the Victorian pornographic magazine *The Pearl* was so called.

Another word cited only from medical texts (1853, 1866, 1880) is *carphology*, laboriously defined as "the movements of delirious patients, as if searching for imaginary objects, or picking at the bed-clothes." There is a delicious extension of this classical term to jazz in Kingsley Amis's novel *Take a Girl Like You* (1960): "The music played. It was East coast stuff, carphology in sound."

For *climacteric* in the sense of reaching one's "grand climacteric," especially the dangerous sixty-third year, *Oxford* traces the expression to Spanish and gives no examples after 1823. I've noticed one in a letter of 26 August 1958 by poet-novelist Robert Graves, reproduced in Miranda Seymour's 1995 biography. *Oxford* misses the ancient source of this word and belief. Aulus Gellius (2nd cent. AD) in his *Attic Nights* (book 15) quotes a letter from the emperor Augustus rejoicing that he has safely passed "the grand climacteric common to all men, the sixty-third year." Elsewhere (book 3), Gellius says this and all such fears originated with the Chaldaeans.

Apart from giving new meaning to the Beatles' "When I'm Sixty-Four," I had to put this one in. By the time it's out, I shall be sixty-three.

N.B.: I am adopting as a slogan this remark by philosopher J. L. Austin, *A Plea for Excuses* (1956): "Going back into the history of a word, very often into Latin, we come back pretty commonly to pictures or models of how things happen or are done."



INTER ALIA

Berthing the Verbiage

Hilary Howard
London

The novels and stories of the once best-selling Dornford Yates (1885–1960) abound in remarkable names for his characters, wonderful place designations and phrases, and sentence structures that are all his own.

His real name was William Mercer, and he was the son of a respectable solicitor and himself a very junior barrister. Once he discovered writing he renamed himself “Dornford Yates” and very early in his career developed two styles: fairly straightforward for his “Berry” books and full of “pomp and pedantry” (to quote Richard Usborne) for all the rest, most of them highly Romantick thrillers.

“He would not merely park but ‘berth’ the Rolls. Most cars in the books were Rolls and they were always berthed.”

Berry (Bertram Pleydell) was a landed gent with a brother-in-law named Bois but always known as “Boy,” not an unusual diminutive in 1911 when the first story appeared in the *Pall Mall Magazine*. Berry is, in the jargon of the time, “priceless,” and there is plenty of period slang, including the arcane “jemimas,” elastic-sided boots. “Old Beans” and “Topping Girls” abound, as they do in Sapper’s tales of “Bulldog Drummond,” and Bertie Wooster would have felt perfectly at home in White Ladies, the Pleydell’s country seat. (A very tame appellation by Yates’s standards.)

He greatly admired the stately paragraphs of Walter Pater, and there are faint echoes of Anthony Hope of “Prisoner of Zenda” fame. Yet only, perhaps, Stanley Weyman, of an earlier generation, would have come up with a sentence structure remotely like, “There I pur-

chased my luncheon and after taking in petrol, re-entered the car for the weather was very fair and I meant to eat by the way.” Having chosen his picnic place, he would not merely park but “berth” the Rolls. Most cars in the books were Rolls, and they were always berthed. Whether this excessively formal, almost archaic turn of phrase came from Mercer’s legal training or from punctual attendance at matins and evensong during his Harrow schooldays is hard to discern. Certainly the rhythms of the Authorised Version and the Book of Common Prayer are much in evidence: “The treasure under our hand was entombed....” “They could count in vain upon our succour.” “Full measure he gave in all things though it were to his own beggary....” “Never would he palter...” “For the Fool she had no time, to the Wicked showed no mercy,” Gibbon’s rolling periods are never far away, and Bunyan must also have been an influence. At least three sinister castles have biblically resonant names: Gath, Midian, and Jezreel.

He uses strange, long outdated phrases: “without” for “outside,” “expired” not for death but for breathing out, newspapers were “public prints.” Arcadia is represented not merely by the customary thicket and coppice but also “helve” and “lynchet meadow.”

His collective nouns are a delight. A “leisure of cows” a “pride of hunters [horses]” a “puppet of stars” and a “tuck of drums” make up far too many purple passages, usually about ancient castles in deepest Austria, where his heroes dug for ancient treasure and rescued fair maidens. They also owned dogs, sometimes important to the plot but like the always-necessary servants, Carson Bell and Rowley, these much appreciated animals had fairly ordinary names—Nobby, Tester, The Knave—though the one canine villain was more imaginatively christened Blue Bandala.



The heroes and heroines were often well-heeled or as Yates would have said, “rich in this world’s goods” and with aristocratic echoes—Dominic Medmenham, Virgil Pardoner, Piers Mariner, Jonathan Baldrick. Was it chance that “Baldrick” became the smelly man-servant to succeeding “Blackadders” in the TV series?. There were surnames aromatic of British history—Bolyn, Plantagenet, Scrope, Bohun. John Chandos was hero and narrator in a whole series whilst one of the few policemen allowed a look-in was the aptly named Chief Inspector Falcon of Scotland Yard, who pops up in several stories. The rescued ladies rejoiced in the fanciful. Lady Idilco, Madrigal Chicele, Katherine Festival, Belinda Series. Some strike the ear a little harshly—Dorothy Bearskin? Agatha Coldstream? Honoria, Duchess of Whelp? (though she was a formidable old dame, not a rescued heroine.) These splendid girls and women were all “gentle in fair weather, gallant in foul,” and whatever the heroine’s privations, the villians were always worsted.

These villians had some horrid cognomens: Douglas Bladder, Sycamore Tight, Leslie Trunk, Casca de Palk, and the somehow very sinister sounding “Reverend Bellamy Plato.” Crooked solicitors were mainly Hebraic—Lemonbaum, Habakkuk, Biretta and Cain, Aaron and Stench. Today the casual racism of almost all the light literature of the period grates horribly. Then it was quite accepted and distressingly widespread.

The action took place in lovely places—Poesy, Brocade, Thistledown Park, Footmans Hassock, Sorcery, Dimity Green, Hunchback Hall, Folk Abass, Miniver Enclosure, Curlew Corner. There are of course many places with similar or even better names in real England. The perfectly ordinary London suburb of Finchley boasts a short street called “Crooked Usage,” Cambridgeshire has a “Trotters Bottom” (once home to Byron’s half-sister), and Devonshire a “Sticklepath” and “Shearwater”—to name a mere sprinkling.

Yates, so ready to sneer at his villians Jute, Sweat, Louse (all minor and expendable), rarely

demeaned places; “Suet-on-Sea” is a rare example, as is “Chunkit,”—but this was in America and his feelings towards that country were ambivalent; his first unhappy marriage had been to a lively and beautiful American.

Sapper’s stories are sometimes said to have influenced the creation of James Bond, whilst Raymond Chandler’s spare style is credited with a whole stable of hard-boiled heirs. Dornford Yates, at least as popular in his day and very much more prolific, appears to have left no literary trace on the language of light adventure fiction. Like his near contemporary in the light music world, Ivor Novello, his characteristic style died with him and is unlikely to be revived. These days our heroes merely park their f...ing wheels.

Sources: Mainly a misspent youth reading my father’s books but aided and abetted by A. J. Snither’s sympathetic biography (Hodder and Stoughton, 1982) and Richard Usborne’s unavailable classic, *Clubland Heroes* (1953, with later updates).



SIC! SIC! SIC!

9:00 ExxonMobil Masterpiece Theatre. “The Turn of the Screw.” Memorable adaptation of Jane Austen’s gothic tale of ghosts, a governess and two small children. [From the program guide for the PBS station KCET. Submitted by Julie May.]



“She struggled for fourteen minutes, submerged in icy water, until she became unconscious. It then took another forty minutes for rescuers to free her. Despite being clinically dead, they immediately began to resuscitate her.” [The powers of the dead are amazing. From the Public Radio International show The World, January 28, 2000. Submitted by Roger Freeman, University City, Missouri.]



The OED Online

Howard Richler
 Montreal, Quebec

What has 60,000,000 words that describes 750,000 terms used in English over the past thousand years? Answer: *The Oxford English Dictionary Online*, launched on March 14, 2000, at *www.oed.com*. Although still in its nascent stage, this revision could double the length of the text of the *OED*, taking the number of words and phrases from 640,000 to 1.3 million.

We should see approximately 4,000 new and revised entries in the year 2000, but thereafter the annual output will be increased to meet the scheduled completion date of 2010. Leading the way in the inaugural edition are 1,000 revised and updated words from *M* to *Mah*. John Simpson, chief editor of the *OED*, says the revision is beginning with the letter *M* because “we wanted to start the revision at a point halfway through the dictionary where the style was largely consistent, and to return to the earlier, less consistent areas later.” We now have entries for *ma and pa store*, *mad-cow disease*, and *made man*. We also have *magic cookie*, a “computer term,” *magic bullet*, a “medical term,” and *mack*, “a sexually successful man,” celebrated by rapper Ice Cube in the following lyric: “You know that I’m a mack in my own right/When it comes to rhyme and rap.” Also new is the word *mabo*. It designates an “Australian high court judgement in 1992 which recognized for the first time that Australian Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders had ancestral rights to land dated from before European settlement.” You can also keep pace with the ever-increasing list of acronyms and initialisms that bombard us. Some examples are *MSP* (Member of the Scottish Parliament), *MOMA* (Museum of Modern Art), and *MFLOPS* (million floating-point operations per second.) Many people bequeath their names to words. A new eponym to grace the *OED* is *MacBride Principles*. This refers to a code of conduct that

requires U.S. firms in Northern Ireland to follow a policy of nondiscrimination in employment. It is named after the Irish statesman Sean MacBride. Alas, we may never know which *Macfarlane* gave his name to the overcoat and whether there truly existed an Australian wrestler named *Maginnis* who was the first to subject his tortured opponent to an unbreakable wrestling hold.

It used to be believed that *mafia* was a long-established name for a Sicilian institution, and the word *mafioso* simply denoted a member of the society. New research, however, reveals that *mafioso* derives from an old Sicilian word, *mafiusu*, borrowed from a Spanish or Arabic one meaning “scoundrel.” *Mafia* was a back-formation from *mafioso* and was born around 1860, after which it migrated into English. *Macaroni* refers to small pasta tubes generally served as “macaroni cheese” or “macaroni and cheese.” The revised *OED* entry reveals that in the 16th century it meant a dumpling, closer to what we now know as “gnocchi.” The *OED* also explains how a word which originally was meant to describe a mere cereal gruel extended its meaning and now can describe a penguin, an 18th-century dandy, a coin, a form of verse (“macaronic”), nonsense in Australian English, a wood-carving tool, and a small violin.

Whereas James Murray’s famed solicitation of 1879 was essentially to scholars, Simpson invites virtually any semiliterate English speaker to participate. All types of English from slang, jargon, and regional dialects are welcome. Probably more important, there is a realization that English, the world’s lingua franca, is now multi-dimensional. The United States represents the country with the largest number of English speakers but only 20 percent of the worldwide total. In India it is estimated that there are 50 million people competent in English. Currently, there are more first-language speakers of English than second-language speakers, but it is estimated that within ten years this situation will reverse because of population trends. Within fifty years there will be 50 percent more second-language speakers than first-language speakers.



Simpson states, “There is no longer one English—there are many Englishes. Words are flooding into the language from all corners of the world. Only a dictionary the size of the *OED* can adequately capture the true richness of the English language throughout its history, and the developments in World English.” Simpson’s “appeal for New Words” brought in more than a thousand contributions, and he says he is “looking forward to hearing more from word enthusiasts all over the world. I hope they will tell us what they like—or dislike—about our online dictionary, and I would also welcome even more responses.”

Because World English is now available in many exotic flavours, I asked the chief *OED* philologist, Edmund Weiner, whether all these “New Englishes” are treated equally in the *OED*. Weiner admitted that those areas where there is a “long-established community of L1 (people for whom English is their first language) English speakers ... have a fairly long tradition of lexicography and research” and that it is “easier to cover them well by drawing on that tradition. As research begins to take place in the other communities and a bank of data about the varieties spoken there builds up, we will be able to cover them better, but inevitably it will take time.”

In any case, in the 1,000 new and revised words from *M* to *Mah* there are many representatives from Englishes from around the globe. Here’s a sampling: *Macgillivray’s warbler*, “bird” (Canada); *macary bitter*, “bitter plant used to treat yaws and venereal disease” (Caribbean); *mdoqua*, “antelope” (Africa); *mcquarie*, “vine” (Australia and New Zealand); *Macanese*, “relating to Macao” (East Asia); *Mahajan*, “moneylender” (India and South Asia); *machiguenga*, “Peruvian American-Indian people”; *mafufunyana* “an emotional disorder characterized by hysteria and hallucinations” (South Africa), and *made man* “a person who has been formally inducted as a member of the Mafia” (USA). There is probably no domain where multiculturalism is as entrenched as in the sphere of foods. Reflected in some of the new *M* foods and beverages:

macabeo, “a wine grape from Spain” *machaca*, “a Mexican dish of dried meat, onions, eggs, tomatoes, and peppers” *magret*, “filet of duck breast” *mabela*, “sorghum grown in South Africa, usually for the making of beer” and *maguro*, “a variety of tuna particularly used in sushi.” Weiner mentioned to me that the Nigerian English *ogi*, “corn meal” and the Indian English *mandir*, “temple,” and *barangay*, “village,” from the Philippines, were three strong candidates for future inclusion.

The work of putting the *OED* online began back in 1987. Simpson says the challenge was not the length of the *OED*, but “its complexity and the importance of maintaining the structure of this historically important, century-old text, rather than adapting it to make software design easier. Aside from the huge number of characters needed to cope with the hundreds of languages in the *OED*, normal computer-based rules for alphabetical order are too simple, so special rules had to be devised.” Two years were devoted to testing designs, and at that point Oxford University Press brought High Wire Press, an enterprise unit of the Stanford University Libraries, on board as its technical partner.

OED Online offers many ingenious search possibilities. Let’s say I want to check what expressions King Harold might have used in the months before an arrow pierced his eye at Hastings. Entering the year 1066 in the “quotations date” box reveals that there is an entry for the word *wardwite*, which was “a fine paid to the lord by a tenant who failed to provide a man to perform castle-guard.” The term *infangthief* referred to “jurisdiction over a thief apprehended within the manor ... to which the privilege was attached.” Not surprisingly, Shakespeare is the most-quoted individual in the *OED*, but let’s say we’re looking for sayings from such lesser lights as John Lennon or Dr. Seuss. No problem. The headword *bullshit* has the following citation: 1970, J. Werner’s *Lennon Remembers*: “He is a bullshitter. But he has made us credible with intellectuals.” The first citation of *nerd* in 1950 is naturally enough from its progenitor, Dr. Seuss,



who wrote in *If I Ran the Zoo*, “And then, just to show them, I’ll sail to ka-troo. And bring back an It-kutch, a Preep and a Proo, a Nerkle, Nerd and a Seersucker, too!”

A search of citations from particular sources reveals that there are 195 entries from works named “Hamlet.” Surprisingly, over 100 of these citations from the Bard’s opus come from the works of William Faulkner. VERBATIM is referenced 151 times from 1974 to 1985. For example, we have, from February 1975, the term *ballbuster* defined as a “graphic, forceful expletive, typically applied to a domineering female,” and VERBATIM Spring 1981 yielded a citation for *whoop-de-do*: “There was many an

safari (1890), and *duka*, “shop” (1924); Basque yields 28 selections, including *scimitar* (1548), *tambourine* (1579), *anchovy* (1596) and *bizarre* (1648). Tagalog has 18 entries, including *colugo*, “eagle” (1702), and *boondock* (1944). As of 1993, the word *naches* (often spelled *nakhes*), meaning “pride at a child’s achievements” was mined from Yiddish and added to the *OED*.

Another interesting search mechanism allows you to find interesting variations on phrases. For example, you can check how authors have described being pretty (“as paint,” “as a tickle-ass,” “as a spotted pup”) or ugly (“as homemade soup,” or “as a bad dream”).

Cruciverbalists will be aided by a search func-

VERBATIM is referenced 151 times from 1974 to 1985.

angry powwow and much whoop-de-do, but in the end, of course, the bigwigs won.”

A feature called “proximity search” is another useful tool. For example, if you want to know if there is a word for the action of grinding your teeth, the proximity search helps uncover the term *bruxism*. If you want to check “edible mushrooms,” a simple search may not find all references to “edible mushrooms” in the dictionary, because in some entries this exact form of the word may not occur. In this instance, a proximity search would do the trick.

If your search is for synonyms, a click in the “definition” field for the word *unmarried* will reveal the words *aneabil* and *onlepy* as well as the more familiar *bachelor*. If you’re a collector of “-ologies” and “-phobias,” you can use wildcards to discover that a *limacologist* studies slugs, and *cremnophobia* is the “morbid fear of precipices and steep places.”

You can also check all the words that came into the English language from a particular language. There are 223 entries from Urdu, including *horde* (1555), *hookah* (1763), and *ambari*, “fibre of an Indian plant,” (1855); Swahili provides us with 48 words, including *bwana* (1878),

tion that seeks words with only some letter clues. Enter *f*k* and discover possibilities such as *faik* (n) “a fold in anything; a ply in a garment (Jam.); *fank* (n) “a sheep-cot or pen; *feck* (v) “to steal,” or *firetruck*.

Simpson believes that *OED Online* will be the definitive tome of tomorrow: “I am sure it will be the version that most people will consult. A dictionary of perhaps forty volumes will be rather unwieldy, but the present hardback has many fans and the *OED* in traditional book form is by no means out of the question.”

The cost of *OED Online* has been developed to take into account the type, size, nature, and geographical location of the institutional buyer. Standard prices for higher education institutions, libraries, and companies start at £1,000/\$1,600 per annum for unlimited network access and include four quarterly updates of at least 1,000 new and revised words. To subscribe to *OED Online* the individual cost is \$550 (U.S.) or £350 (U.K.) per year.

[Howard Richler writes his weekly “Speaking of Language” column in the Montreal Gazette (see www.montrealonline.com.) His most recent book is *A Bawdy Language-How a Second-Rate Language Slept its Way to the Top* (Stoddart).]



OBITER DICTA

Name of a Dog

Jerome Betts

Torquay, Britain

A piece of *Goon Show* dialogue, filtered through the crackles of a grandfather's ancient wireless set, still powered by accumulators, seemed the epitome of wordplay at a tender age. "Name of a dog!" cried Peter Sellers in some Scarlet Pimpernel take-off, with the sort of cod-French accent subsequently made famous by his Inspector Clouseau films. To which the instant reply from the Harry Secombe character was "Fido!"

Fido, from the Latin for "I trust," had become an almost parodic dog's name, presumably reflecting extensive use in Victorian times. Other dogs in radio shows of around the *Goon* era had comic names to service running jokes, like the dog in *Life with the Lyons*, which regularly attracted the command "Down, Upsy!" Although by no means very common, *Psyche*, the dog played by Percy Edwards in *A Life of Bliss*, was more in tune with the now-predominant trend, having a name that could be shared with a human being.

Recent surveys agree that the most popular names today, such as *Sam* and *Max*, seem to reflect a view of dogs as members of the family, rather than inhabiting the somewhat more distant world of *Spot*, *Shock*, *Bounce*, *Towser*, or *Rover*. Yet of these perhaps the last, for one, may be having a new lease on life in the hands of the Duke of Edinburgh, who, it was recently revealed, often names his dogs after cars, such as *Mini*, *Minx*, and *Maestro*.

However, pet dogs with the names of people go back a long way. A memorial brass of 1438 provides the name *Jakke* for Sir Brian de Stapleton's dog, and one of around 1400 in Deerhurst Church, Gloucestershire, identifies Lady John Cassey's as *Terri*. A beagle called

Nancy is recorded in 1626, and a lap-dog called *Pearl* in Queen Anne's day. In the 18th century the tendency to bestow such names on pets became more pronounced. This was despite the objection of moralists in previous centuries to giving Christian names to animals, a taboo much longer observed in France.

Modern names like *Ben* and *Lucy* have the virtue in many cases of clarity and of being unembarrassing to call in public, despite the risk of confusion with any similarly named children around. Not so the joky type of name, like a St. Bernard called *Achy Breaky*, a Great Dane, *Gravedigger*, *Jacket Potato*, a Jack Russell, or *Gearbox*, a mongrel. The element of wit is unlikely to survive constant repetition. Perhaps kennel names, only used in the show ring and in pedigrees, are better outlets for this kind of humour.

Huntsmen may not be so inhibited about bawling bizarre names in public, and a survey of foxhound records over the centuries produces not only the euphonious and elegant, like *Mulciber* and *Dorimont*, but also such curious specimens as *Maniac*, *Maggoty*, *Hernia*, *Bedlamite*, and *Carrion*. Rather jollier were *Beano* and *Bubbly* from the 1920s and *Bathtub*, *Rainfall*, and *Deluge* from more recent years.

Current events may be reflected in foxhound naming, with a crop of *Winstons* and *Churchills*, and even a few *Gandhis*, during the Second World War, and a *Telstar* in the 1960s. All these are multi-syllabled, in conformance with the studbook, and respect the practical principle of a stressed first syllable. But it is unlikely there are many contemporary foxhounds called *Tony*, or *Gordon*, though *Prescott* and *Mandelson* might make names dignified but bawlable at those tending to stray "off-message" in hunting terms.

On the "Give a dog a bad name" principle, it is to be wondered how animals called *Maniac* and *Maggoty* turned out. Today's advice is not to give dogs, particularly large ones, "aggressive" names like *Satan* or *Killer*. The perceptions aroused by the name's overtones may prove a self-fulfilling prophecy.



All in all, dogs should no doubt be named as carefully as children, who also have feelings to be considered. Speaking of children, there are some of us who apparently got our handles from long-deceased canine favourites rather than the other way round. This is a difficult act to follow, as well as fostering the suspicion that one of your parents preferred bullterriers to ankle-biters.

It is even worse when your pink-eyed, white-haired namesake turns out to have been himself called after the canine hero of a Jack London novel. When, much later in life, you discover the plucky literary pup was indeed a terrier, but of the Irish variety, an identity crisis may impend. Still, let us be grateful for small mercies. At least it wasn't *White Fang*. . . .



EPISTOLAE

Mat Coward, in the Spring 2000 *Horribile Dictu*, stated he has never known precisely what the term *roll-out* means. A short explanation of its origin follows.

The term *roll-out* comes from the aircraft industry and is roughly analogous to *launch* in the shipbuilding industry. The primary meaning is the formal ceremony which occurs when the first aircraft of a new type is rolled out of the hangar in the presence of the workers and dignitaries from the airframe manufacturer, and representatives from the customers under contract and the major subsystem suppliers. Speeches are made expounding the great advances of the aircraft and thanking all involved in its design and construction. At this point the aircraft itself is structurally whole and has most, if not all, major subsystems installed, but much check-out is yet to be done before the first flight is attempted.

It is this meaning of *roll-out* which has been kidnapped by no end of marketing geniuses for their devious ends.

Every individual airplane that comes off the line obviously also has a point at which it is rolled out for its final check-out, but these roll-outs are shabbily attended affairs, with only a few workmen and inspectors doing their jobs in anonymity present.

Ken Way
Granby, Connecticut



I liked the latest *Classical Blather* by Nick Humez (VERBATIM XXV/2, Spring 2000). Re the cigarette as a unit of time, I think the voyageurs used to measure portage distances in "pipes," carrying (too) much weight until *crumpling* was called for and smoking a pipe as a measure of how long one might rest.¹ In a somewhat similar vein, Brooks Atkinson wrote,² in his book about hiking in New England,³ about how they would break camp in the morning, a process which was often hectic, and instead of simply shouldering packs and walking off in a harried mood, they would stop and sit for a pipeful,⁴ after which they could proceed much more pleasantly.

Almost makes me wish I smoked.

Notes:

1 A word perhaps coined by the Appalachian Mountain Club meaning "collapsing" but more evocative.

2 Former *New York Times* drama critic.

3 *New England's White Mountains: At Home in the Wild*, describing trips in his youth.

4 Presumably just tobacco.

Barry Goldstein
Newtonville, Massachusetts





BIBLIOGRAPHIA

You've Got Ketchup on Your Muumuu: An A-to-Z Guide to English Words from around the World, by Eugene Ehrlich (Henry Holt, 2000, \$24).

What could be more all-American than ketchup, the king of condiments? We put it on our burgers, our frankfurters, our fries (all right, so they're French fries). Yet the word is derived from two foreign languages: Malay and Chinese, meaning "fish sauce."

In fact, many of the words we use can be attributed to our polyglot heritage.

Eugene Ehrlich, author of *Amo, Amas, Amat and More*, has collected a veritable babel of words and phrases that we use without even realizing their foreign origins.

So sit back in your comfy dungarees ("from the Hindi *dungri*, a kind of coarse cloth") and huaraches, enjoy an aperitif before digging into your bagel or croissant with a schmear, your canapés, and a café au lait. After you're nourished, lie back on your chaise longue with your dachshund curled up at your feet, and dig into this tasty fare.

Ehrlich eschews the banal as he selects his examples, so there's no need to be blasé about another volume of odd expressions. There are already enough of those to drive you meshuga.

Granted, he does toss in a few items that one does not commonly encounter, and you may think he's just a poseur, a member of the intelligentsia with an overdeveloped sense of hubris. That attitude takes a lot of chutzpah and would surely be a gaffe; Ehrlich is obviously gung ho about his topic and carries the book off in an entertaining and informative manner. And he's not afraid to admit he doesn't know it all: "Why 'Brut' was chosen as the name of a men's after-shave lotion and cologne is beyond me. Which is why I write books such as the one you are reading now instead of creating names for commercial products."

There are plenty of Latin terms, used in the

legal and medical professions, which have become familiar to any television aficionado: *nolo contendere*, *habeas corpus*, *in flagrante delicto*, to name just a few. And Yiddish phrases are always good for a colorful description, especially when begun with the "sch" sound (*schlemiel*, *schlep*, *schlock*, *schmaltz*, *schmooze*, *schmuk*, and *schnorrer*; many of which can be used interchangeably).

Afficionados of language will find hours of amusement reading about the variety of foodstuffs that originate in other languages. Including the aforementioned noshes, there are enough foreign delicacies to make your mouth water: *hors d'oeuvre*, *knish*, *jalapeño*, *espresso*, *shish kabob*, *kielbasa*, *lasagna*, *mousse*, *pilaf*, *sherbet*, *strudel*, *sukiyaki*, *sashimi*, *sushi*, *vichyssoise*, *waffles*, and don't forget the *poi*. Now if you'll excuse me, all this talk about food has made me hungry, so I'm going to vamoose to the local restaurant—they're having a smorgasbord.

It's a fait accompli that word lovers will find *You've Got Ketchup on Your Muumuu* a nirvana. Ehrlich has once again proved himself a maestro of the lexicon and raconteur par excellence.

Ron Kaplan



SIC! SIC! SIC!

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[Quite a crack team of professionals they have there! Submitted by Barry Gerharz, New Orleans, Louisiana.]



EPISTOLA

[In] the article by Nick Humez (*VERBATIM* XXV/2, *It's About Time*) is it true to say that “a balance sheet is only meaningful if it is related to a particular accounting period. . . . during which the transactions took place”? A balance sheet is a statement of assets and liabilities (a “snapshot” of the business) *at* (or “as/at”) a *specific* date; it is the end result of the transactions which *have* taken place. It is not a summary of the transactions themselves.

I don't know how many other accountants /auditors/nitpickers subscribe to *VERBATIM*—but I hope you have been deluged with calls and correspondence on this subject.

Yours sincerely,

Julian E. Smith
Oberursel, Germany



MISCELLANEA

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In Memoriam

Frederic G. Cassidy
1907–2000

David B. Guralnik
1920–2000

BIBLIOGRAPHIA

The Cassell Dictionary of Anecdotes, Nigel Rees, Cassell(UK) or Sterling(US) ©1999, US\$19.95, UK£12.99 ISBN 0-304-35195-4, 307 pp).

The cover promises “1000 entertaining anecdotes on themes as diverse as Fame, Flattery and Forgetfulness.” I didn't count how many of the anecdotes I found entertaining, but it was a good bit less than the full thousand, and it was all my own fault. If I had been prescient enough to read the (London) *Times* and watch more of the BBC-TV channel carried by my satellite television provider for say, the past twenty years, I think I would have found more of the anecdotes entertaining. But as a culturally deprived American, I was at a loss for an average of an anecdote every few pages.

However, the anecdotes in which I could puzzle out the players were very amusing indeed. And I was quite taken with Mr. Rees's (who is a noted UK media personality) careful annotation of provenance for many of the anecdotes. For, surely, anyone can make up a good story and just apply it to some random celebrities—the story seems more valuable if you can be certain of the celebrities' involvement.

If you are “falling into your anecdotage” (as Disraeli wrote), this is certainly a good source of ammunition, especially if you are familiar with British media culture. If not, just be prepared to say “Gerald Berners? Viscount Montgomery? Oh, well, it's still a good story!”

Erin McKean



EPISTOLA

What to do? I am in a quandary. I agree fully with the point you make in your piece in Vol. XXIV/No. 3, titled “Intolerable Intolerance, Redux.” Even though I am a retired English teacher with 23 years’ experience teaching English and read always with the invisible red pencil poised (I cannot help it), I force myself not to comment on others’ grammar or usage unless asked. Now I have two problems:

1. You asked, to wit: “N.B. I hereby give all **VERBATIM** readers license to correct me at any time, by phone, mail, e-mail, or in person.”

2. The five items that made my invisible red pencil quiver—three instances of pronoun-antecedent disagreement in number, one instance of “reason is because,” and one instance of “most importantly” rather than “most important” at the beginning of a sentence—occur so frequently in the general media that they probably should be accepted as standard usage, nor do they interfere with the basic communication.

Had these usages occurred in any piece other than one composed by **HERSELF**, the Ed., I would have quelled the quivering and gone on reading, but with the explicit invitation to “correct me” in the same piece, I got to wondering.

(1) Did the Ed. put these in deliberately just to smoke out English teachers over 60, retired or otherwise, who are condemned from early conditioning to read always with the invisible red pencil poised?

Or (2) Is the Ed. consciously using the plural pronoun to avoid the “male chauvinist” *his* or the awkward and cumbersome *his or her*, believing that avoiding offense is more important than pronoun-antecedent agreement?

Or (3) Is the Ed., a generation Xer, unaware of earlier strictures against these usages? Which is it?

They are easily “correctable”: the departures from agreement can be eliminated by substituting “people” for “person” in the first one, “other people’s” for “someone’s” in the second, and “all people” for “everyone” in the third, with, of

course, appropriate changes in the form of the verbs. For “reason ... is because” substitute “reason ... is that,” and for “importantly” substitute “important.”

Gosh, I haven’t felt this good since I retired from teaching English in 1988. I feel useful: I feel that I am doing something to make the world a better place!

While I am on a high, may I point out one more: I think that “I like that ‘bad English’ exists” would be more idiomatic if written as “I like it that...” or “I like the fact that...”

Sincerely,

John Morris
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Herself, the Ed., responds:

First of all, I must admit to being a Gen-Xer, one of the teeming millions who were never required (or even taught) to diagram a sentence or use a slide rule, and who doesn’t register any disjunct in the sentence “Everyone should bring their books to class.” I am—more or less—steadfast in my support of this construction, hoping that a continuous assault will overcome objections like water wearing away stone.

On the other two items, though, I am certainly guilty, if not of unclear writing, then certainly of sloppy writing. I appreciate the corrections (although I’m not about to call out “Thank you Sir, may I have another!”) and am humbly trying to do better (see the reviews in the next column for my current reading).

It is exactly these kinds of errors (errors that do not affect comprehension) that give one a frisson of pleasure to find and a positive spasm of pleasure to correct, even silently, under your breath. Since this is so much fun, I have given **VERBATIM** readers leave to correct me at will, thus sparing their family and friends. The errors that affect comprehension, however, are even more fun to point out, and, even though you might know exactly what the speaker or writer meant, I certainly wouldn’t want to tell anyone that they (there it is again!) shouldn’t kindly say or write “Did you mean this? Or that?”



There must be some eponymous rule, such as Murphy’s Law, that explains why almost any written correction of someone else’s grammar or spelling is itself sure to have one grammatical or spelling error. (Yours, is, at least to my eye, a happy exception.) A corollary must be that anything written by the editor of a language magazine is also sure to have a sneaky little careless error (dropped in by the word processor, of course!).

In the interest of making sure that those sneaky little careless errors are more sneaky and less careless, I picked up two new improving books: *Word Court*, by Barbara Wallraff, the *Atlantic Monthly* columnist and editor (Harcourt, 2000, ISBN 0-15-100381-5 US\$24.00, 368 pp) and *Words Fail Me: What Everyone Who Writes Should Know about Writing*, by Patricia T. O’Conner (also Harcourt, 1999, ISBN 0-15-100371-8, US\$18.95, 230 pp).

Word Court in the *Atlantic Monthly* is the place “wherein verbal virtue is rewarded, crimes against the language are punished, and poetic justice is done.” And, since even a descriptivist has pet peeves, I thoroughly enjoyed seeing some heinous (but often seen) usages get their lumps from Barbara Wallraff, including *between* for *among* and the problem of *fewer* vs. *less* (not essential distinctions but certainly very nice ways of telling the sheep from the goats), and *prevaricate* for *procrastinate*. (Since it is conceivable that you’d want to do both, it would be good to preserve the distinction, so you wouldn’t have to use the baldfaced *lie*, the smarmy *fib*, or the wimpy *evade*.)

Ms. Wallraff is not, however, an indiscriminately avenging angel. In her friendly, clever style, she admits that certain distinctions she makes (e.g., *proved* as the past tense of the verb *prove*, and *proven* as the adjective) are not, and should not be, universally made. Ms. Wallraff, better than any other prescriptivist I’ve read, knows that a spitting, hissing, foot-dragging rear-guard action can’t slow a change in English by very much, if at all. At most, it can make those

conscientious writers (and to a much lesser extent, speakers) who are past school age (and who have not internalized the hypercorrect usage) feel vaguely uncomfortable about certain usages or constructions. Perhaps one time in a hundred the vague discomfort will drive them to look things up. And if the contested usage is sufficiently widespread and the dictionary of recent vintage, they will find that the usage that gave them a twinge is there, marked *informal* or perhaps *nonstandard*, certainly not anything like *wrong* or *unacceptable*. (Or heaven forbid, *ignorant*.)

No, she knows that the point of the finer points is to share a certain pleasure in a daintier, more precise use of language, to be able to shade your meanings finely, and to be able to break rules for a reason instead of as a matter of unthinking course. And as such, her pleasure in making her *Word Court* rulings spills over onto the reader.

Patricia T. O’Conner is another friendly, clever writer, whose book *Words Fail Me* doesn’t say anything new about good writing—but says it in such a compulsively readable way! This book was so enjoyable that I kept it on the nightstand for three a.m. nursing sessions with my newborn son, and soon found that I needed to forcibly put it down and go back to sleep. This book is a perfect present for students of writing at all levels, and for seasoned writers who want a pleasant reminder of why the writing process, when it goes well, can be so much fun.

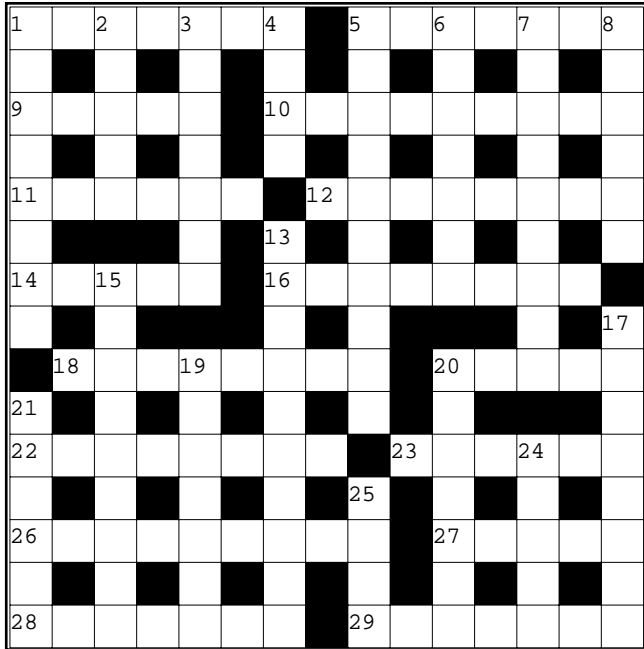
Erin McKean

Across: 1 C+LIMBER 5 LUCIFER (ang.) 9 RIATA (rev.) 10 UNDEERFOOT (ang.) 11 BUTTES (beauts hom.) 12 (S)KIN-D)EEP 14 LISZT (1st hom.) 16 H(ILL+T)OPS 18 PER+VERSE 20 TT(LE 22 NOT(A+T)ION 23 STOGIE (ang.) 26 RICOCHETS (ang.) 27 NO(O)SE 28 PIL-SNER (hidden) 29 DRAGNET (ang.) Down: 1 CO+RN+B+ALL 2 IN+APT 3 BRA+VEST 4 TROUT 5 LADY-KILLER (ang.) 6 COR(O)NET 7 FLOWERPOT (rev.) 8 RETYPE (hidden) 13 CH(A+RIOT)EER 15 SKEP-TICAL (ang.) 17 TEN(E+M)ENT 19 V(A+T)ICAN 20 TITANIA (ang.) 21 ENTRAP (partner rev. -r) 24 GRAN (groun hom.) 25 USED (US + + ed)



Anglo-American Crossword No. 85

Compiled by Pam Wylder



Verbal Analogies

Dr. P. A. Pomfrit

1. Hawaii : Kanaka :: Israel : ? (5)
2. Belly : Coeliac :: Birthday : ? (10)
3. Toes : Digitigrade :: Outer side of foot : ? (9)
4. Reed-like : Arundineous :: Straw-like : ? (11)
5. Trumpets : Buccinal :: Stringed Instruments : ? (9)
6. Ape-like : Pithecoïd :: Bran-like : ? (8)
7. Women : Men :: Spanogyny : ? (8)
8. Soil : Terricolous :: Meadows : ? (12)
9. Feet : Scarpines :: Thumbs and Fingers : ? (10)
10. 64 : Hemidemisemiquaver :: 128 : ? (23)
11. Lover of Wisdom : Philosopher :: Superficial philosopher : ? (11)
12. Charge on oath : Adjure :: Renounce on oath : ? (6)
13. Assumed name : Alias :: Arrest Warrant : ? (6)
14. Fishing : Piscatorial :: Holidays : ? (6)
15. Public vehicle : Omnibus :: Paper spill for lighting a pipe : ? (7)
16. Coronation : Curtana :: Samurai : ? (6)
17. Cessation : Apnea :: Normal : ? (6)
18. Heart : Systolic :: Alimentary canal : ? (11)

Across

- 1 End of athletic agile individual who scales Everest (7)
- 5 Satan is cruel if provoked (7)
- 9 A cowboy might toss one in sky to the west (5)
- 10 Noted four bugs below. . . (9)
- 11 . . . steep plateaus--humdingers by the sound of it (6)
- 12 Shallow drip without class (4-4)
- 14 Composer's program for the audience (5)
- 16 Ailing diplomat finally boards short flights for summits (8)
- 18 Deviating from propriety by means of poetry (8)
- 20 Claim territory covered with flat stone (5)
- 22 Thought about a journalist's last written comment (8)
- 23 It goes around something you smoke (6)
- 26 Wild soccer hit takes a rebound (9)
- 27 It's used for hanging bouquet containing orchids primarily (5)
- 28 Pupils nervously carrying kind of glass (7)
- 29 Granted new system for apprehending criminals (7)

Down

- 1 Unsophisticated company nurse initially believes everything (8)
- 2 Fashionable apartment is not suitable (5)
- 3 Undergarment on top of waistcoat is most bold (7)
- 4 Swimmer loses face in overwhelming defeat (4)
- 5 Romeo liked rally sports (4-6)
- 6 Instrument bearing wreath and crown (7)
- 7 Tip about wild animal overturning clay container (9)
- 8 Classify again in entirety perhaps (6)
- 13 A disturbance interrupting applause for driver (10)
- 15 Let's pick a suspect for questioning (9)
- 17 Low-income housing with temporary shelter inhabited by English chaps (8)
- 19 European palace vehicle carrying a jerk (7)
- 20 Maybe it ain't a Shakespeare character (7)
- 21 Aspiring associate wanting to lure someone into crime (6)
- 24 Heard adult make a sound of disapproval (5)
- 25 American education in service (4)

Answers to Verbal Analogies: 1 Sabra 2 Genethlac 3 Taligrade 4 Stramineous 5 Fidicinal 6 Ptyroid 7 Spaneria 8 Prtincolous 9 Pillwinks 10 Quasishenidenssemiquaver 11 Psilosopher 12 Abjure 13 Captas 14 Ferial 15 Ftidibus 16 Katana 17 Eupnea 18 Perstatlic