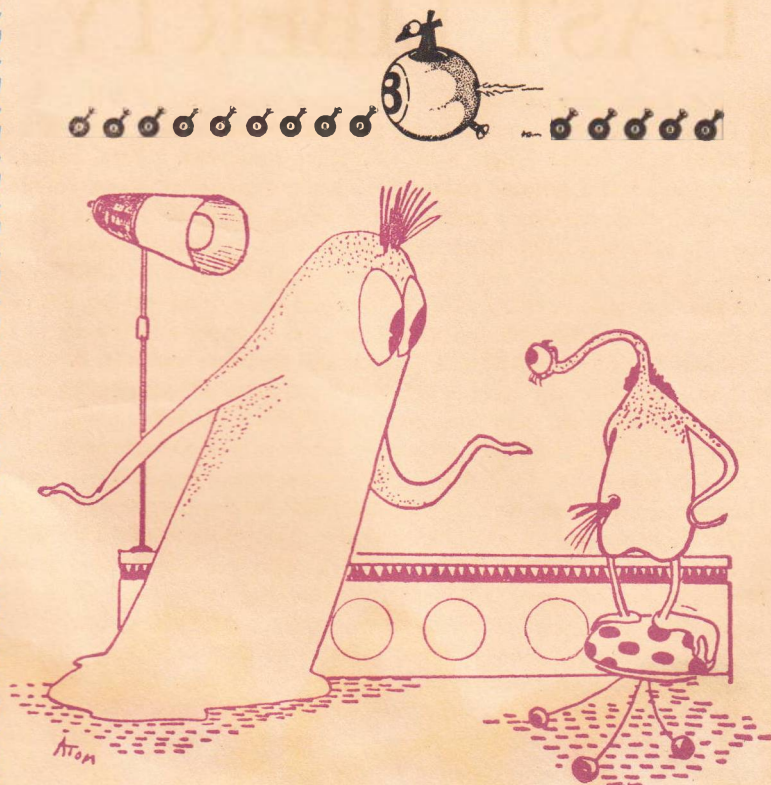


STEIFANTASY

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THE FIRST PAGE

By W. MILDEW DANNER

EAST LIBERTY

WHILE I was growing up, and until some years after WWII ended, East Liberty was a busy and thriving place where almost any goods or services were to be found. There were two office buildings, several banks, three or four drugstores and a genuine pharmacy, a small department store, confectioneries, etc.—and three hardware stores, one of which, Graff Bros., was the biggest I ever saw. Its plan was much larger than usual, with countless drawers and bins and shelves, all well stocked, and two or three upper floors were filled with bulk goods and raw materials of every kind. If I needed some brass—sheet, rod or tube, I'd tell a clerk and he'd scribble something on a bit of paper and tell me to take it to Mr. Soandso on the second floor, I'd go up and find him and Mr. S. would cut off what I wanted and add another scrawl to the note. Downstairs again a clerk would weigh and wrap the stuff and collect at the rate of 50¢ a pound. Many a time in later years I wished I had stocked up while it was possible at 50¢.

East Liberty was served by 7 or 8 trolley routes, one of which started there and ran to Homestead via Shady Ave. and Squirrel Hill. When I started at Peabody in 1921 the 73 Highland had all seven of the only double-deckers the Pgh. Railways Co. ever had. One was dubbed 'The Peabody Tripper'; it was waiting at the corner of Highland and Margaretta when school was dismissed and I liked to climb to the upper deck and get a seat at the front, for its commanding view.

At that time there were seven movie theatres in East Liberty, though the oldest and smallest, the Rex, closed a year or two later. I attended it several times and was interested almost as much in the small pipe organ under the screen which was played by rolls controlled from the projection booth, as in the screen itself. A far better accompaniment for the 'silents' was provided than I've heard in recent years on TV, with the single exception of the spectacular restoration of Douglas Fairbanks' 'Thief of Bagdad.'

When I paid my fare on entering the 73 I got a free transfer to the 75, which took me to Penn and Dallas, two short blocks from home. The transfers allowed at least two hours before they became void, so there was plenty of time in East Liberty to forage for what I might need from Graff's or from one of the two big 5 & 10 cent stores, which were conveniently located just a few doors apart. Sometimes there was time enough on the transfer for a movie and I'd spend eleven cents (the war tax was still in force) at the Regent or the Liberty or the Cameraphone or the Alhambra. The Sheridan Square had vaudeville and serials, which I didn't much care for but, after the advent of the talkies, it had movies only, with excellent sound. I didn't know the Triangle, on Franstown Ave., until after I started driving in 1924. About the time of the sound revolution a new, big theatre, the Enright, was built on Penn Ave., several blocks west of Highland. It opened with much fanfare and had programs like those of the Penn and Stanley, and Dick Powell was M.C. For some reason, it stopped drawing crowds in a year or two and changed to movies only and then to double bills and kiddies' matinee on Saturday. About 1957, when

it was not much more than twenty-five years old, the Enright was demolished.

I think it was in the sixties that the 'urban re-development' do-gooders took over East Liberty and changed parts of it beyond recognition. Streets were closed, new streets were cut through, and whole blocks of shabby old buildings were replaced by shoddy new buildings. Penn and Highland Avenues, for a block or two each way from their intersection, were made into a pedestrian mall.

Some years after this costly project was completed, the Sunday Press carried an illustrated article demonstrating the fact that East Liberty had become a ghost town. There were no theatres, thanks largely to TV, a great many stores were vacant, and there were very few pedestrians on the mall other than the members of juvenile gangs and other such riff-raff.

A year or two ago a group called East Liberty Developments, Inc., was organized for the purpose of revitalizing the area. One of its projects, 'The Regent Returns,' has undertaken the complete restoration and remodeling of the only one of the theatres remaining. It is to become, next year, the third Pittsburgh theatre to be reincarnated as a performing arts center, and '... will be professionally equipped for plays, dance performances, concerts and movies presented by Pittsburgh-based as well as nationally-known groups.' I have made a contribution to the project and my name will be on a sidewalk paving block in front of the entrance.

May all good fortune attend these activities, and may East Liberty once again be the thriving little city-within-a-city that it was so many years ago.

English as She is Spoke

We should be in store for a couple of nice days. . . At that reading it's very susceptible to CO poisoning. . . All the houses must have one porch. . . Defensing the wishbone is a circumstantial happening but given the enormity of this fire . . . It never happened before. This is an unusual recurrence. the ex-a-cutors of Heinz' estate . . . If they want to smoke they can excuse themself and go outside. . . Mozart's Brandenburg Concertos. . . Both of our husbands betrayed each of us. . . I did some waitressing. . . It would be deja vu all over again. . . It might be well to relish this war to the history books. . . If anything happens, bulletin-wise, we'll let you know. . . Everybody was suffering from nauseous. . . They didn't receive hardly any rain. . . What are the importace of that? the first premiere of a new analyzation it not only smashed trailers, but picks them up and threw them. . . (1) They must be kept moist, and (2) They must not be allowed to dry out. . . It was very fun doing the puzzle. . . Interest reduced $\frac{1}{2}\%$ to $5\frac{1}{2}\%$. '.005%' to 5.005%' was shown on the screen. . . The fascination that people hold for James Dean between the two of you's renord part of the floor began to raise up. (Said by a school superintendent.) . . . She had a master's degree in sacred music. . . Part of it was found by you and I. . . What's not going to happen is that the government is not going to shut down. . . I'm an alumni of Kent State. . . This is one of your last chance to hear which is probably something you don't even know what I'm talking about. . . I don't see it as a picture picture, but as a felt sense. . . Does it matter the length apart between each tie? . . Black and gold is a great color together. . . Nobody wants to admit that they're a politician. . . Two adults have pitted a five-year-old child against each other. . . These number of people . . . Rossini denigrated those pieces for strings. , dance McCobber



THE MAIL BOX

EGOBOO AND OTHER STUFF

From WRAI BALLARD

Seattle, Wash.

February 2, 1992

My mother played piano for silent movies before she was married and I was raised hearing a lot of piano playing in that style and from the period from before WWI and till the 30s. I can remember her doing the trill or whatever you'd call it on some stuff (*Hearts and Flowers* perhaps) and since her orchestra consisted of her and a drummer, at times she would show how they covered it when the drummer was missing by putting paper between the hammers and the strings, which did give a sort of snare drum effect.

A few years ago Metro decided to do away with many of our trolleys [GM stockholders in management, perhaps?] so they took down the unsightly overhead wires. Planned to put all wiring underground. Unfortunately they found that there were a number of hills that only a trolley could cope with during some admittedly rare bad winters. So now we have unsightly wires again and quiet trolleys running down 45th Street. And then there is the tunnel running under downtown and the special-type bus they got for it. Great idea if only it worked

From MIKE RIZZONE

Dallas, Texas

3-26-92

As you probably know, the P. O. brags about its two-day service. I recently sent a two-day letter out on a Saturday to a Pennsylvania address. It got there on Monday, but it was the Monday nine days later. [Others, too, have had similar experiences.]


From GUNNAR KALBACK

Akers Styckebruk, Sweden

February 25, 1992

Yesterday I saw a film about the American Mountain Lion, the Puma. What a beautiful animal it is. Of all the cats, this is the number one beautiful in my taste.

Have you ever heard of an artist by the name of Carl Oscar Borg? Partly he painted western motifs like Remington, mostly from Arizona and Navaho and Hopi country. He also worked for a short time as art director in Hollywood. His first film was 'The Black Pirate' of Douglas Fairbanks. [The name is vaguely familiar, possibly from the credits of that fine old swashbuckler, the first feature, I think, made entirely in the then-new two-color Technicolor process.]

I read somewhere that people who come from far away to Sweden are puzzled by our 'mania' for lighting candles. What do they mean MANIA? I have a candle burning just beside me. I admit that I am using more than others, but it comes natural. I like to have it when I sit like this writing a letter. The day will come when I don't light that candle. Then the urge to light it doesn't come back until fall. . . What is your feeling for lighting a candle? Is that something you do only at Christmas for a tradition? [Except for fancy ones in fancy holders which some like to look at and never light, I haven't even seen a candle for over 75 years. This is the only candle I own: 

We have, of course, seen that film showing the police beating the hell out of a guy. My first reaction was anger, of course. Now, a couple of days later, we have been offered a widened view of the whole thing. To my amazement I understand that a film like that can show two different things depending on one's knowledge of such situations. I still think that those policemen maybe used a bit extra force, but I no longer think that they were trying to beat him for pleasure.

I am still angry, though, but now I am mad at the role TV has in this. Of course there was power in the keg already, but TV supplied the fire. Now that I know more I realize that such a thing as that amateur video should not be shown to the public without proper guidance. After all, we can't ask the police to clean up the world if we forbid them to use some power

From AL LOPEZ

Bingham, Maine

May 8, 1992

I wonder if people realize how many of their freedoms are being taken away from them little by little because of laws such as the land-use laws forced upon the people of Maine (and presumably all other states). I happen to be chairman of the Appeals Board in Bingham and have been asked to handle two cases. One of them involves a young man who was building a wood shed (a square platform with a roof and open sides). He was building it on the edge of his property next to a fence consisting of a line of trees on his neighbor's property. Unfortunately, the law says you cannot build anything less than 10 feet from the edge of your property, (and 24 feet from the edge of a road!) The foolish thing about this is the fact that he can pile his wood in a large mound on the same spot [at the edge?] but he can't have a floor under the wood or a roof over it! More and more the federal and state governments are trying to tell people how to live every facet of their lives, and what they can and cannot

do with their property. When I look at the mess our federal and state governments are in, I feel less and less inclined to let them try to run my affairs. [They'll keep at it, alas!]

From NED BROOKR

Newport News, Va.

June 2, 1999

Warner is right about computer printout. The data printouts from our wind tunnel are bad enough—most of the endless columns of numbers are never read by anyone; they look at the graphs that come out at the same time—and the theoretical gang are even worse. Monstrous stacks of numbers from some theory, and they will look at a few and tweak the theory and rerun it all over again. [Awful!]

I am rather suspicious of Bob Bloch's tale about 2-cent postage. [Same here.] Does he mean you put 'Republic' where the zip code would go? Perhaps I will try it next time I want to see how long it takes for a card to get from the curbside box where I eat breakfast back to the house, about 15 miles. The last time it took a week. [Probably took one of the USPD's 150-mile joyrides.]

Speaking of Jeffrey Dahmer: since the Mike Tyson rape story was covered on the sports pages, howcum Dahmer's exploits weren't in the Food section? Why is his crime considered worse than the common run of murder? At least he made some use of what he killed. [Yes, but he killed a great many more than he needed, and we're all, except for the USPD, expected to practice conservation.]

From JOHN HORN

Little Rock, Ark.

June 3, 1992

Stefantasy arrived yesterday in fine shape. You sure do get some interesting mail and I really enjoy reading it. I know just how Julie Burke feels when she sees typecases used for knickknacks and I'm even more distressed when I see wood type used as wall decoration.

H. Martin's heading (in *laSW*) in all caps script did indeed sicken me but then I'm becoming somewhat anaesthetized to such typographic atrocities, what with all the untrained idiots using desktop publishing computers. I've considered starting a scrapbook of atrocious typography but figure it would take up all my time.

My collection of type now includes about 1500 fonts of metal and 200 fonts of wood, and the press collection is something like 200. Yes, I was a commercial printer, but mostly in the offset field. After a couple of lawsuit settlements, my rich uncle died, I won the lottery, and hit it big in both Las Vegas and Wall Street. [No oilwells in your back yard?] I quit work and started collecting. I started with one 10 x 15 C & P and a few cases of Stymie. My latest addition: the Stanbrook Abbey Columbian!

From DOROTHY T. DANAHEY

Clearwater, Fla.

6/4/92

I just can't understand why an outfit like our dear Post Office dep't. would run a contest to find which of 2 designs of an 'Elvis' stamp the majority of the people want. With so many people in the U.S. to honor with stamps, why would anyone even suggest one who was a junkie, cheated on his wife, and was altogether no-one to be admired? And think of the money wasted. [It's not a waste of money, for millions of those stamps will be bought by his mindless devotees and never used. They are, of course, a waste of resources, in line with the USPD's expanding program for hauling tons of mail hundreds of miles for 'proessing' and tearing some of it to shreds, and hauling much of it right back again.]

This is story building has no provision for recycling anything at all. What really gets to me, tho; is that so many of these elderly people around me are not one bit concerned about the environment, and a lot of them don't know anything about any of our problems with the environment.

From DICK DAGER

Canton, Ohio

05 June 1992

I sent the department store which sent the perfume samples with its bills a note, with the check, asking in some cheap fragrance the kids left here. I requested they leave the samples out of my bills or our business would go elsewhere. Inside the next bill there was a memo from the store manager advising the samples would be left out of my bills from now on. Hah! What do you bet the darn things will be in there again? [It's a sure thing.]

As usual, Stef and the contributors were jewels of wisdom. You have a sterling following in your correspondents. I envy you!

From DWIGHT R. DECKER

Phoenix, Arizona

4 June 1992

My effort at writing a story/novel set in the 1911 era are still proceeding, albeit slowly due to lack of time. What a lovely era . . . after plumbng but before income taxes. [and with real freedom.]

You'll note the stamps on the envelope show pioneer aviatrix Harriet Quimby. When I first saw the stamp, I thought contemporary standards of feminine beauty were warping historical accuracy—nobody looked that good in 1912! Then I saw some photos of her in the 'Women Aloft' volume of Time-Life's 'Epic of Flight' series. Well, ex-cuuuuuse me! Harriet Quimby really was a great beauty! She was the first woman to fly across the English Channel but, as she did it the same weekend the Titanic went down, her great deed was blown out of the newspapers. Nice to see somebody remembered her, even if on a stamp (and along with Elvis)

From LEE HOFFMAN

Port Charlotte, Fla.

4 June 1992

On the subject of computers, they are only tools. It's people who use them badly or incorrectly.

They are handy for a lot of things, but they are not the ultimate, all-purpose tool. There are a lot of times when a common typewriter would be handier and more efficient. There are times when a pencil is ideal. Desktop publishing by computer and photo-copier should be a high-tech replacement for mimeo and ditto, not for printing. It is no more an adequate substitute for 'real' printing than a four-color separation print is an adequate substitute for an oil painting, or a TV dinner is for a freshly-cooked meal made from fresh ingredients. Each should have its place in the world. But in our society cheap & easy pushes out quality & craftsmanship. The less people are willing to settle for, the less they're going to get.

Your story of the 12-year-old who substituted for the soused trolley driver reminds me of my uncle, Hurshel (sic). Back around 1920, give or take a few years, he was a streetcar motorman. His folks were running a small eatery adjacent to the streetcar line. According to my mother, Hurshel would park the car, go into the eatery, and play the slot machines with the company nickels, leaving his passengers waiting. Needless to say, he failed to make a career as a motorman.

I've been hearing about the return to trolleys in more civilized parts of the world. [Some never did away with them, being out of reach of G.M.] I am all in favor of them. I think an interurban paralleling U.S.41 in this area would be ideal. I know most of the population likes air-conditioning and lots of speed, but I'd be happy with an open streetcar like the ones in Savannah when I was a kid. I'd like to take a leisurely ride to the next town up the line, enjoying the breeze and the scenery.

From DARRYL REHR

Los Angeles, Calif.

June 1, 1992

A publication mailed to me on April 30 did not reach me until May 26. They took nearly a month to slap one of those little yellow labels on it to forward it to my new address. To make matters worse, the postal operations for both zipcodes (my new one and old one) are in the same damn building!

Kier and I are now successfully transplanted in the cute little house. I use the term 'transplanted' probably because of all the time I'm spending on the garden and grounds. My green thumb is not all that bad, and I welcome the opportunity to resume my interest in growing things. It's something to occupy me when not finding old typewriters (which means most of the time!).

From VIC MOITORET

Silver City, N.M.

4 June 1992

Finished reading *Stef* 110 at and after breakfast and now before I card-index and file same, better get off an acknowledgement, and THANKS! Like getting 44 letters all at once, plus your own reminiscences and ad, making it 46 . . . and not one asking me for money! Surely does make up for days and days of junk mail!

Query: can that robotic dog be programmed to react properly to a fire hydrant? [Who knows?]

Thanks for the fill-in on Clarissa Hammacher Smith. I had never seen anything in the pages of *The Fossil* or *The National Amateur* about Miss Hammacher's membership in NAPA. Her father's farm might have been a tobacco farm—they did and do grow quite a bit of the weed near Baltimore. Her own family sounds fascinating, indeed, with 5½ boys and 5½ girls. The child that was half boy and half girl might have been queer enough to have shown some interest in amateur journalism, wouldn't you think? [Yes.] But, never mind—if she took Mencken off his bicycle (you said he was a peddler, didn't you?) and put him on the road to a journalistic career, that is accomplishment enough for anyone.

I am deeply grateful for your back cover—I had not yet invested in a CD player and now I can skip that expense and wait for Musichips to show up in my local Walmart. Will there be an effort to provide a wide range of classical music in that format, or only rock and heavy metal stuff? [Dunno.]

From HARRY WARNER, JR.

Hagerstown, Md

June 4, 1992

There is something weird, I think, about the lead article in this issue. It tells about your youthful adventures in the extreme northwestern part of Pennsylvania. The postmark on the wrapper is dated May 30 from Erie, Pa. I know the postal people send mail from small towns and rural areas to larger cities for sorting nowadays but can't believe mail sent by people in your part of the state goes all the way up there for that purpose. . . . Whatever the cause, it reached me on June 1, much faster than most mail from such a distance. [Believe it, Harry, but not that your copy broke any speed records by the USPS. See The Last Page of §97. Pisgah, get ready!]

I sort of like 'We've had one problem after the next' because it describes my life more accurately than more orthodox syntax might. On musical stupidities, I remember the time a radio announcer told me that the next selection would be a composition by Rimsky, as arranged by Korsakof.

My current favorite for odd town names is Eek, a village in Alaska.

Musichips may be a reality before long, if I understand correctly what I've been reading about the distant future of recordings. I even saw a prediction that there will be 'records' with a playing time of a month or more. But I'm still dissatisfied with the fidelity of CDs and most of those I've bought have been reissues of very early electrical and even acoustic recordings. [For the orchestra, I find digital recordings inferior to analog ones, though many digital recordings of chamber music are very fine.]

From ROBERT BLOCH

Los Angeles, Calif.

June 1, 1992

Just an acknowledgement and a thank-you for ~~№~~ 110, with its all-star LOC section. No, I didn't get to Nottingham in May, and haven't seen Ethel Lindsay for too many years, and regret it.

If first-class letters would go for 2¢, then postcards should be 1¢, but I'm not about to press my luck—just leave it wrinkled, as always. Hoping you are the same,

From MARK MANNING

Seattle, Wash.

June 2, 1992

In Singapore, the government recently abolished its laws censoring X-rated movies. As a result, within a week, the only movies playing in Singaporean theaters were X-rated! Apparently, the government got complaints from citizens who wanted to see something besides *Almóvodor's* 'Tie Me Up, Tie Me Down' and similar gems, because censorship was re-imposed right away.

My Brazilian correspondents, too, say things are bad there. One letter arrived from São Paulo this week with two separate postage meter strips, as if rates had risen between the time the customer paid and the time he got his change back.

Sad to hear that battleship linoleum is getting thinner. It's said to be getting rarer, too. Some experts have been predicting that it won't be made at all soon—printers and other artists just aren't a big enough market for the manufacturers. [*What's replacing it on battleships?*]

From BILL HAYWOOD

Alliance, Ohio

3 June 1992

[*This letter made it here in only seven days for the arduous trip of about 100 miles.*]

The Parkway you took from Manhattan to Patchogue couldn't have been the Long Island Expressway (variously known locally as the LI Distressway or the world's lonest parking lot) but more likely the Grand Central Parkway (still used, although some of the curves have been eliminated) and its branch, the Southern State Parkway. It has been a few years now since I used any of these, and I imagine the traffic on all of them must be horrendous, particularly on weekends.

I can't imagine why the use of ragged right has proliferated. Space between paragraphs is also getting to be a common practice, probably due to the transfer of typing practices to computer composition. [*Everything is going to the demnition bou-wows. Down with 'em'!*]

From ETHEL LINDSAY

Carnoustie, Scotland

June 8, 1992

Thank you for *Stefantasy* 110. Your letter column goes from strength to strtength.

The first British Mystery Convention was a big success. Within minutes of sitting down in the hotel lounge I found myself in conversation with Alanna Knight. Her books feature a police inspector in Edinburgh in Victorian times and, knowing the city, I find her backgrounds fascinating. As the last book of hers that I read had as one of the characters the poet McGonagall and had as its background the Tay Bridge disaster we had lots to talk about. McGonagall and I share the home town of Dundee. Among the interesting things I have lately found out about McGonagall are that he taught himself to read and write, that he wrote in proper English, not dialect, and that he was highly thought of then and now in the writing profession. He had four complete Shakespeare plays off hy heart. One does wonder how he would have turned out if given today's education. [*He might have become a hippie.*]

Once again your cover does honour to ATom and I am very much pleased about that!

From PHIL PARR

Levin, N.Z.

June 7, 1992

About Ethel Lindsay's reading of 'Father & Son': I have read that book, and others about P. H. Gosse (the father) because I greatly admire his scientific work, especially on 'Thr Rotifera' (which have been my lifetime scientific hobby. His 1886 book was for a century the standard text on these lovely little planktonic animals, and he was a marvellous microscopist and illustrator. So maybe the son had a hard time, but I can forgive the father for the religious logicality which made him sure God had made the fossils to confuse impious people! There still seem to be lots of fundamentalist Americans who go along with that. [*Alas!*]

In 110 I enjoyed the whole thing, of course, and, like some of your correspondents, feel it keeps me in touch with long-known names (even more-so now I've dropped out of the NAPA) but best of all was No. 13 inside the back cover. More, please!

From PHIL CADE

Winchester, Mass.

June 9, 1992

It's another fine issue of *Stefantasy*. It must take a long time to set all those acres of small type, and then to distribute the million pieces. [*You exaggerate. A rough count of 8-pt. gives about 40,000.*] I liked the 'North East' article. I remember the 1921 Packard Single Six I bought around 1950 for \$95. That was a great car. It had an air compressor for pumping up the tires that could be coupled to the flywheel by raising the floorboard. [*So did Dad's 1926 Packard Eight.*]

That's quite a collection of 'English as She is Spoke.' I don't suppose it was too hard to find the evidence, but you must have had to write down each example as it occurred. Some of them are so humorous that they could have been intentional. Carson could blame his writers for his ignorance of chemistry. [*As a college graduate he might be expected to know better.*]

The weather here hasn't been much better than yours, although today is beautiful. Saturday was

Town Day, and there was heavy rain and drizzle on and off. I don't know how that affected the Cow Chip Roulette. *[I can imagine, and it's not a pretty picture.]*

From DEAN A. GRENNELL

Mission Viejo, Calif.

Tues/9 Jun 92 or so

Violations of the mother tongue happen all the time. In 1960 I encountered a professor of English at the University of Ohio who peppered his verbal output liberally with incessant repetitions of 'ect,' vocalized as ekkt, apparently his cognate for et cetera (etc.). This is depressingly common. A loading gate at Denver airport directs boarding passengers to Satna Ana.

Odd names: A few years back, I had a communique from a reader in Thailand who rejoiced in the name of Pisces Pernambuba. My parents once knew a family with the surname of Henshit which, it was noted, was pronounced very quickly, sort of 'Hench-ett.'

Like Walt Willis, we never had any ice at all when I was growing up. Houses in Wisconsin had cellars or basements that stayed some few degrees cooler than outside ambience and perishable items were kept there and consumed with minimal delay.

Refrigerators, by the way, seem to be among the most durable of mankind's devices. Back around 1970 or so, we picked up a used 'fridge in Covina for about \$25 and, 22 years and a bit later, it is still humming away in the employees' lunch room at the office, with no slightest signs of faltering.

On the other hand, I have a red darkroom safelight bulb with a carbon filament which I bought at some point in 1948 and to the present, it remains as good as new. *[So does mine, which is over sixty years old. Carbon filaments last forever but are inefficient. When I was a kid the Duquesne Light Co. gave them to customers for the asking; they boosted light bills.]*

Sincere sympathies to Dorrit Johnson and Warren B. Delano for their difficulties connected with residing in Brazil. I've had several letters from Brazilian readers relating the problems involved and it makes me grateful for the USA *[Yes, but our Big Government is headed the same way, alas.]*

From WHIT TOWERS

Los Angeles, Calif.

10 June 1992

It must be that I've given up 'battling City Hall' as a worthless activity. . . Just wonderful, that color cover of Joe's Robotics, Inc. walking the dog. It set my mind (?) to wandering and wondering if I could design such a robot to respond to all the nutty appeals I receive for funds.

I agree with you about ragged-ass right hand margins. They keep creeping up everywhere. Even my L.A. Times and Forbes Magazine indulge in such nonsense. At first I thought that it was the result of some inexpensive clone computers which lacked ability to justify right hand margin like a fine ole Linotype MacHine. However one of my pals claims that even the lesser equipped can handle flush right with no problem. *[We're out of date. Some youngsters now say rag right looks better. Alas!]*

From WIM STRUYCK

Capelle A/D yssel, The Netherlands

10th June '92

English as she is spoke: Very nice. You can find Dutch as she is spoke in all our newspapers, or hear it on TV. Sometimes you wonder if those people ever went to school before they started writing in a newspaper. *[Teachers can't teach what they don't know, especially when they're on strike.]*

From AL FICK

Cottonwood, Arizona

11 June 1992

Great cover! And a total letters issue. Well, not really total, since the best thing in the issue, in my opinion, is the biography of Clarissa Smith. . . Regarding Clarissa's husband, Lemuel: 35 or 40 years ago a black by the name of Lemuel Smith murdered the wife of a well-known Amsterdam (NY) funeral director. Later Smith was out of the pokey and in N.Y. City held up a drycleaning establishment and beat the woman proprietor or clerk to death. His case was prominent because it figured in the controversy in N.Y. State over the death penalty. Later he killed a guard in prison. Ugly as sin and meaner than hell. I remember seeing him play on the high school basketball team. He did pretty well, probably because the kids on the other team were scared to death of his size, temperament and looks. *[Unfortunate choice by Clarissa. wasn't it?]*

From NED BROOKS

Neport News, Va

June 16, 1992

Your letter came Saturday, the rest of the mail was in the box but your letter was tastefully displayed on the lawn. I think they must know what we think of them!

Have you ever typeset music? *[No; for centuries type for it was cat, but I've never seen any of it.]* I am still working on the idea of reprinting 'Quest of the Starstone' from the 1941 *Weird Tales*, and adding the music we used to sing 'Green Hills of Earth' to in the 60s. Still need an artist, too. I have it retyped to print in the WT double-column format. *[Won't your computer set music?]*

From D. P. HILLBURG

Palm Bay, Fla.

June 19th 92

Panama Rocks is my old territory. My Dad's general store was at Panama Station on the PRR, the stop for the town of Panama. A great time to go was in August, to find some snow and ice still in cracks in the Rocks. There was a long, steep hill on the dirt road leading into town, and once there was big excitement when a team of horses pulling a hearse ran away on the steepest part, overturned, and spilled all the contents. Big headlines at that time!

Wonder if you would be interested in being Vice President. [NO!] You would be helpful. We might as well think radical. You could take some measures about the Postal Service, assign members of Congress to the Peace Corps for two years, and tell GM to start making street cars and Bullet trains. They can't seem to make cars any more. [40 years ago they made buses that caught fire while running.] That would be a starter. I can still dream that someday something might approach normal.

From AVRAM DAVIDSON

Bremerton, Wash.

xxii.92

All I know about Mail is that the They of the Them have decided on abolishing it and thereunto are making it so difficult and costly that we will all rush out and get Fax machinz. . . I should have stayed in 1935 and refused to get any older and stuck with nickel Popsicles and cars with running-boards. . . Were some genius/philanthropist today to devise a non-sugar root beer Popsicle I would KILL for it.

Three days ago I felt the gahDAMDest pain in 3 of the toes on my right foot. Said I (in the midst of my yells which disturbed the torpor of half the hogs in Kitsap County and caused them to come running for food that wasn't there) 'Either I have just been stung by a scorpion or that is The Gout!' I examined my slipper to an extent not equalled since the days of Cinderella, but naught did I see of any arachnid. So I suppose it must of was the gout, which has a high old aristocratical Sound to it, but I have no history of vintage port, don't you know. Still, Come what may, will, in the words of the old Sage Augustus the Ephesian. (I used him in my book 'The Phoenix and the Mirror,' c. 1969, and nary a feedback did I get even unto this day. O, does it jingle any bells thar in Stefantasy Land?)

I am afraid that the 'law' reported by Robt Bloch (hi! Robt!) that you can compel the USPS to deliver your letter for 2¢ as long as you add the word REPUBLIC to the address, is one big Political Fantasy prob (if not indeed certainly) spread by those citizens far to the Right of the Radical Right, the ones who stamp their letters with THIS IS A REPUBLIC NOT A DEMOCRACY/LET'S KEEP IT THAT WAY! If such a letter got through to Robt twas only because some USPS emps let it pass with a yawn; such things are not taken out of their pay. I have been often assured of Little-Known Laws which would be to my advantage if only I were to invoke them—snch as the Great Veteran Pay-Off which wd be paid 'but you MUST request payment yourself!' Which I did, grasping fellow as I am—there was no such law, never had been, and the VA had in 40 yrs+ been unable to find out who keeps circulating the false reports—evidently out of some folk-belief that if enough people act like it's True, the Guvverment must cave in. Then too I was assured that although my Vets Pension is Non-Service-Connected (Okay I was bitten by a free-lance hula girl in Honolulu; sotified?) I could receive it in any foreign country same as tho I had been Wownded endurin The War. Finally I called the VA and inquired. The answer was, that I cd indeed live anywhere I wanted to, but the Non-Servo-Con Pen cd only be mailed to an address in the U.S. Just this very week I was assuredly assured that the soft-hearted ol VA wd pay my med and pharm bills even tho I had that old shame-faced NonServPens. So I called the VA. Again. And 'Elline' she said her name was—'Hi my name is Elline and I'll be your burcperson for the duration of this call—this is a Republic not a democracy, let's keep it that way!' ensured me that my friend was full of well-rotted sheep manure and that if I did not have a Service-Connected-Disabilty Pension good old Uncle Samivel wd not spring for so much as an aspirin.

Hello Ethel Lindsay! Say, Al Fick, Fuchs means 'Fox' and I dunno why all such-named people don't do such a change, i.e. Fox, Fewkes, Faukes, Fawkes. In fact I have heard Fuchs pronounced Ficks.

Alf Crosdale: The Year the Old King died (and Tulyar won the DARby) I rode on the last, well, by a week the last, double-decker trams running from the Elephant and Castle pub under the Thames to Southwark. Had I but known, I wdve rode and rode and . . . but there was a conspiracy to prevent my knowing. The sleazy popular press had no warning, being filled with sleazy popular stories such as 'Should Prince Phillip Play Polo on Sunday?' If there were no Royal Family the sleazy daily British press, the sleaziest daily press in the English-speaking world, would drop dead. Bar none. DEAD, dew hear? DEAD! [Alan Dodd's opinion of it is similar. Do you include even the Times?]

You are very welcome, Olive Thomson. Arthur is as clear in my memory as yesterday, and I am sorry that I failed to keep in touch: a lesson to all of us, KEEP IN TOUCH, do you 'ear?

How is it that I can write this SPIFFLE for generations at a time and yet cannot sit down and turn out commerciable MSSS for bug scuffle? Every time I see your impeccably-set tripography I am a small boy again watching the periwinkles and the hermit crabs and the sea-weed in the tidal pools at Milford Conn on Long Island Sound; the air smells of Brine and Dank and Six different kinds of popcorn and hot dogs and hamburgers and salt water taffy and I have sand between my toes and someone named Mr Hoover has very recently succeeded someone named Mr Coolidge and I am slightly confused by the double-ohve but really nothing will convince me that cat-tails do not have immense intrinsic value and I keep lugging them to our cottage rented for the huge vast sum of \$200 per summer shared with my Aunt Sadie and her son Martin, and now along comes the trolley-car which takes tokens and [Thanks for the lovely spiffle. Wish I could have printed all of it, but space is limited.]

From ROBERT LICHTMAN

Glen Ellen, Calif.

June 24, 1992

I always enjoy your tales of motoring in the long ago and 'North East' was no exception. How different it was then. I remember the pre-interstate days, but you remember the pre-pavement days.

As to 'English as She is Spoke,' these are a choice lot. I'm reminded of my father's life-long 'because on account of.' In addition to grammatical error, though, there's the ever-present erosion of proper pronunciation. The diphthong is on its way out. A friend tells me of a garden show on TV all three of whose hosts refer to 'folage.' Things have deteriorated badly. Misspelling has accompanied mispronunciation, as in 'intestinal track.'

I enjoyed Bill Morse's additions to the Amusing Place Name List. When I was in the U.K. on my TAFF trip in 1989, I noticed Mundania Road in the London A-Z Directory and the countryside is full of town names like Lord Hereford's Knob, Lord Reay's Green Table, Blubberhouse's Inn, New Delight and Upper Dicker. [The last sounds like something from Monty Python.]

Jake Warner is right about the high use of paper due to computers and laser printers. What he doesn't point out (perhaps it isn't happening in Greenbelt) is that many work sites now insist upon recycling such waste paper—so far as is possible—and also buy recycled paper for use in copiers and printers. [In putting out one of these things I sometimes spoil as many as two sheets.]

Nice to see the continuing ATom covers and the letter from Olive.

From HAROLD SEGAL

Philadelphia, Pa.

25 Jun 92

Thanks for the June issue of *Stefantasy* and the accompanying letter. Forty-seven years of setting 8-point type. [Didn't use much 8-pt. until the *USPD* got so greedy and I cut down to 14 pages.]

Good luck with the IBM Composer. It was a well-used machine in many printing offices in the '50s before phototypesetting came into the picture, and that has been replaced by the desktops. Just imagine the progress in the last 40 years! Just imagine the time saved if you could compose your pages on it and had line cuts made. Even art-work interspersed. And no distribution! [But I like to set type, and even to distribute it. Technical progress is fantastic. Newspapers and magazines get rapidly worse.]

From ROSE THOMPSON

State College, Pa.

July 1, 1992

Probably the most spectacular exhibit [in Pgh.] is the Omnimax Theatre, of which we were told there are only 35 in the world. The viewers sit in seats going up a tier, as when one watches a planetarium show. The screen is the entire dome, 79' across. Thus the viewer is in the picture. There is no feeling of being in a plane looking out of a window, or on a moving platform, etc. The current film, through Sept. 25, is 'Ring of Fire', earthquakes & volcanos. There was vivid footage of the 1980 S.F. quake while the World Series was in progress. Makes one wonder whether the Omnimax system adapted someone's 16mm or 35mm film, or just happened to be filming the Series for possible future use. There were flights over S.F. in which the sensation was of being held by the heels out of the plane's door. That was less comfortable. Before the film started there was an announcement that anyone feeling uncomfortable should just shut his eyes for a brief period. The volcano eruptions shown were filmed in Japan, Bali, Hawaii & Mt. St. Helens. As of 9/26 the film will be on a space flight & we want to go back.

We met 30 members of the Inland Waterways Assn., from England & Wales, in Pittsburgh, by prearrangement. We all took the Gateway Clipper Fleet's tour boat down the Ohio to the dam and through the first lock, then back. Some of us rode the light rail system, as some of the canal people are also train buffs. That figures—we're all trying to hang onto dying situations, although I must qualify that by saying the canals & rivers navigable for pleasure boats are alive & well in Gt. Britain

From BOB FABRIS

San Jose, Calif.

7-1-92

We recently spent an afternoon at a local narrow-gauge steam line—we had a shareholders' meeting of the Roaring Camp and Big Trees Rwy. [See cover of *Stef* 75 for Dec. '74] and we were treated to a 3 mile run up the mountain behind a Shay. With six cars full of passengers, 'Dixiana' made about 3 mph on the steepest slopes. It rises about 450 feet to the hill-top loop. There is a print shop on the premises, doing tourist things, but we've never been there when it was open. Looking through the window, I could make out a Linotype of about 1915 with 10 fonts of type advertised, and a small belt-driven press with an 18" ink plate.



From DICK DAGER

08 July 1992

For the first time I'm beginning to think our great country is on its last legs. There just isn't any sincere leadership anymore; just politics and the damned lawyer mentality running rampant in all phases of life. We are being taken over by the millions of immigrants [many of them illegal] who come from countries where everything has to be a hassle, and education and cooperation are secondary to their existence. Middle-income people and those who have managed to save a few bucks for a rainy day are being eliminated slowly by the reduction in income from savings and the continuing inflation spiral. There just ain't no middle-income group anymore, just the super rich on one side and the so-called poverty-stricken on the other. Something tells me it will have to come to a head soon, especial-

ly with the immoral debt being racked up daily. I hope I'm wrong, but I can't see a practical solution anywhere on the horizon. Can you? [No. Let's build a time machine and return to 1925.]

From ALF CROSDALE

Lymm, England

4-7-92

I print 1st day covers for Antarctica, usually for 4 bases—Welby, Signy, Rothera, & Faraday. I used to do Brabant Island, but it is no longer occupied. The Philatelist who deals with them lives not far from here. I got the job thru' a friend who, due to illness, was no longer able to do them. How he got the job in the first place I don't know. They are not done in large quantities, usually 80 for each base. This is probably why the Philatelist uses the services of a small printer; the bigger printers wouldn't entertain anything less than 500 or 1000 of each base. Sometimes they are of a single colour, but mostly they are either two or three colours. They are very interesting to do, & obviously are what a printer would call 'fat work'—they pay very well! There are usually 2 or 3 issues per year. When I have done them, the Philatelist sends them to Port Stanley (Falkland Islands). The agent over there puts the stamps on them & posts them back individually in the usual way. The Philatelist then sells them, mostly to Russian & American collectors. I am not supposed to keep any of the covers, but as I am entitled to keep one of everything, I keep one of each for my private collection, which I stick into albums. Of course, I don't have the stamps and, if I did get them, they wouldn't be cancelled.

We have private parcel delivery firms also, plus the usual U.K. postal service. The privates are good!

From ALAN DODD

Hoddesdon, England

10th August 1992

The death of Benny Hill made me think profoundly. He died alone with 12 million in the bank, and it took two days to find the body. . . I decided to take money from my investment account and put it in my current account and use it for a last fling, so I have been out of the country much of the time. I went off to Portugal for a few weeks, came back and, as a studio I know was doing a trip to photograph Thailand, I went there for four weeks.

I took my favorite blonde model, Louise Hodges, with me; she is great company and has a great sense of humour and, as her mother said, 'It's nice to have a pretty girl on your arm.' That's all it was; we had separate rooms and after the first night she took up with a young Thai navy captain who has a BMW and a Mercedes and whose father is an admiral. . . It was a long, tiring haul there: seven hours to Dubai, a wait of two hours, a change to a second plane and another seven hours to Bangkok, then three hours by bus to Pattiya. We passed through two time changes and missed a night's sleep and with jet lag it was two days before I felt any resemblance to normality. The flight is so boring and tiring that they now have small TV screens in the backs of the seats.

From LOIS YALE

Charlotte, N.C.

Aug. 21, 1992

I, too, have found the 'airmail' service to overseas points particularly puzzling, and aggravating; it is so erratic. Sometimes an airmail letter to my tn-laws in So. Africa will take 3 weeks and they will end up writing to ask me why I haven't written.

I can relate to what you said about today's marvels—called progress. I have an IBM Selectric & it started giving out Vs when I hit the M. I took it to the shop & after an aggravating length of time it was ready to the tune of \$62, but they wouldn't guarantee the work. So, of course, after about a month I'm back to V for M. [With any golfball?]

From EDWIN C. HARLER

Levittown, Pa.

9/14/92

Nice to see another ATom cover. He certainly had a great sense of humor. . . Slow mail? My son sent me a 902 letter by Priority mail that took eight days to reach me. He could have sent it first class and saved money [and time]. . . A GM dealer stole my deposit on a car about 20+ years ago. GM wouldn't even give me the courtesy of a reply, so they lost me as a customer. And I notice they're losing a lot of other people. Should they go down the drain I'll be one of those who will not weep. [They may do so; they expect a loss of \$2 billion for this year, atop last year's \$4 billion loss.]

From AVRAM DAVIDSON

9.xxix.92

Ah trolley-cars. As a very youngling I had a notion that they were places where semi-immoral doings were attempted. Very often, as I was playing with my teddy-bear and hence Safe, my Grandmother and Great-Aunts and their contemporaries would tell tales about Mashers, their voices growing lower and then, rising, invariably the line, 'I took out my hatpin and——' Here words failed them, they were laughing too much; words were replaced by what I later thought of as gestures (hard g) of hatpins being plunged, of Mashers rising precipitately, yelling, and jumping/running for their lives.

I never took a trolley ride I didn't like. In 1960 when the Pittcon was held and the locals were in a fever over the Pirates, I took several trolley-car-rides, Gawd knows where. Of c. I liked them. But I would've liked them all the better had they been the Real Old Trolleys we had in Yonkers until the End, instead of the whorish-new-fangled PCC cars, vaguely resembling a cross between a bus and a Budapest suburban local [The PCC car was introduced in 1936; it saved some streetcar lines for years.]

Unfortunately the ones I've taken most often in decades were in Saffron Cisco, where they are PCC cars. I have lately read that cable-car fares now cost \$2.00, and I am planning to move either to

Brazil [Better check with Dorrit first] or northern Unguentine as soon as our reporters there give us directions, and instructions on how to motorize my porta-potty.

Youragway? Anybody know anything about Yon-a-gway?

The PRR letterhead recalls to me one of the very first responses to my administration as editor of *F&SF*. It came from either East Schnitzundkepp or West Stoltzfuss, Pee Ay, and it began, 'Too often the purple cow has walked the yellow brick road up,' or lingo to that effect. I printed next to it a critical postal card from a Chicago kid named Gary Gygax. I don't know what happened to Gross-dawdy Kuchenfresser, but Gygax went on to invent DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS.

I may also have mentioned the Stephen King-and-me-as-editor story but, as I have done so only c 87 times, I shan't do so again, fascinating as it is: I sent him his first personalized rejection slip when he was 12 years old, and if you'd like to know what he's done for me, just ask. Otherwise wild trolley-cars wouldn't draw the story from me.

Well, much as I shd like to pretend that I have something else to do with my time, I am obliged to put some more paper and carbon in the tripewriter and stare at it. Rules of the game. SFWA insists. I gotta do this for at least 37 minutes: then I am allowed to rip it out, using language which would have gotten me publicly run over by loose Locomobiles in 1927. Say, I see some so-called reporters have just discovered a new type of Cigarette Crime in LA. It's called LOOSE CIGARETTES, termed 'loosies' for short. Is there nothing low and vile which our fearless reporters fail to expose? They must have hired Penrod and Sam to do underground work on this Scoop. I won't swear that this crime was going during the W.H. Taft administration, when (my father recalls) any drug store had a jar of white powder with a sniffing quill; cost: one dime. No international corruption, no drug wars, no drive-by shooting: pay one dime, shove the quill up your nose, and go out (as he put it) stepping high. But I swear to Grannies that Loose Sea-grats were openly sold during the H.C. Hoover administration, for one cent per piece. And I am sure that there are millions of good upright citizens with clean armpits who would love to drive the Cigarette Traffic underground, using submachine guns and the CIA. (Personally I am convinced that if the Coolidge Guys had armed the WCTU Ladies with derringers, Al Capone would not have survived the year. But who listened?)

From DORRIT JOHNSON

Sao Paulo, Brasil

28 de Agosto de 1992

The news about our continually surprising country is screaming through the world. Everybody and everything is so confused that even the weather does not know what to do. . . The same way people were shoutingly asking for Collor as President (and so did I) now they are doing the same (and so do I) to get him out. [It's usually that way here, too]. . . After Collor tried to make fun of all the Brazilians through all sorts of stupid notes, he came to make a nationwide speech and told us 100% of lies. . . Now that, item by item, the CPI (Parliamentary Inquiry Commission) found all the proof and MUCH, MUCH MORE than anyone could suspect was going on, our President ignores everybody and everything and says to reporters of other nations that this all is only manifestations made up by candidates for the government posts in all the states; everything was in best order with a few isolated manifestations of some discontented people because he, Collor, was putting order in the country. We are all absolutely speechless and the only explanation we have is that he is cracked. The impeachment is inevitable and if he would come back, personally I suspect it might have extremely serious consequences. Maybe even a revolution.

To show his strength, Collor asked all Brazilians to wear, on the following Sunday, clothing in green and yellow and put the banners out in front of the houses. On Sunday most of the population did spontaneously dress black and red (for blood) and the flags had black bunting on them. The ministers said that if Collor would have one more of those brilliant ideas, they all would hide under the furniture. ¶ Collor is losing one battle after another and keeps silent while the Nation is waiting for an explanation that he owes us. When all this searching started, we all were deadly afraid for what could come out. We were really praying we would be wrong and that Collor was saying the truth. It is much, much worse than the darkest pessimist could imagine and in pessimism we are, at the moment, GREAT! All Brazil wishes that he resigns but Collor said he would not, no chance to leave before the end of his time. In fact he is not governing any more; the ministers took over and he just signs papers presented to him. He must be sick; there is no other reasonable explanation. We always had robbery in the government and we knew that, but not in that dimension. Our money is elsewhere but not in Brazil. ¶ My mother came to live with us . . . and things are not so bad. The only problem is that I am getting a sort of pirate complex: part of the day, like a pirate looking for a treasure for which he has lost the map, I spend searching for things that my Mother displaced. In between I also look for stuff Warren and I have put in 'very safe places' which we cannot remember anymore. . . Do you misplace things also? [My middle initial is M. Do you find things only when searching for others?]

From WARREN B. DELANO

Idem

20 Sep. 1992

The reason for all this delay in replying, I guess, is the terrible political situation here. EVERYONE is depressed, from corporation presidents to stonemasons and streetsweepers. And in line with

THE LAST PAGE

"You can fool some of the people some of the time, and you can fool some of the people some of the time, *but you can't fool some of the people some of the time.*"

—AMBROSE J. WEEMS

The USPD Rides Again

I FORGET who called it that, but it seems apt; the 'D' is for 'disservice.' I've mentioned the decision by some PM that only airmail is 1st class for overseas and I now post everything at Cranberry. It may not appear so, for, as I found out after a copy of # 110 from which I had inadvertently omitted the stamp was returned with an Erie postmark, all mail from this area except that for delivery within the sender's zipcode area is trucked to Erie for 'processing' and then, of course, much of it is trucked right back again, for a joyride of some 160 miles. For example: a letter for me left at the Cranberry office, which is 6.5 miles from here, must travel 172 miles to get to the Kennerdell office so the carrier can bring it the final 6.5 miles to my box. The USPD may consider this sort of thing to be a big step toward efficiency, conservation of natural resources and the reduction of environmental pollution. To me it is waste verging on criminality.

To those of you who think # 110 was delivered unusually promptly: forget it. All copies were dropped into the outside box at Cranberry after it closed on 5-28. Why they were not cancelled until 5-30 is anyone's guess. Maybe the truck for Erie broke down and had to be towed by a retired giant tortoise from the old days. Maybe the giant new 'processing center' in Erie broke down or, perhaps, some employee, unable to read or write, simply made a bad guess. Maybe mail is routinely postdated to make the service seem to be better than it is. Who knows?

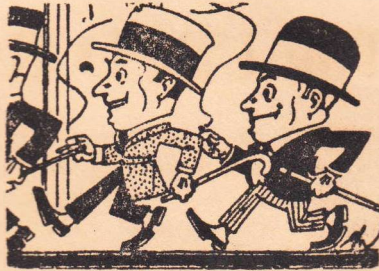
I once amused myself by dreaming up fanciful names for characters in an imaginary novel—names such as Barnswallow, Espansivo, etc. Then it occurred to me to get them from the 1967 Pgh phone book. I got only so far as the Ds, but found some worthy of Dickens himself. These are all family names: Buggs, Buggy, Bugle, Bunn, Buzzard, Bzdiak, Bzdiak, Croak, Crock, Crook, Crummy, Cabbagestalk, and Dagg. From another source I found that the real names of actors Oskar Werner and Joanne Dru are Josef Bschliessmayer and Joanne la Cock.

Dorrit's observation, one month later, all the Ministers are hiding under the furniture, with the exception of those who apparently are in the same boat with Collor.

The old (ha!), frail (ha!), and not always (RIGHT !!) gentle lady has been on a sort of vacation since 10 Sep., visiting old friends in Votuparanga, Riberas Preto, Jaboticabal and other unpronounceable places in the state of Sao Paulo, between 250 and 500 km from here, and she'll be back in a few days, so I'm finishing up this letter as fast as I can, so as not to learn, one more time, just how ungente she can be. Incidentally, she's not going to jail—the object of her letters very probably is.



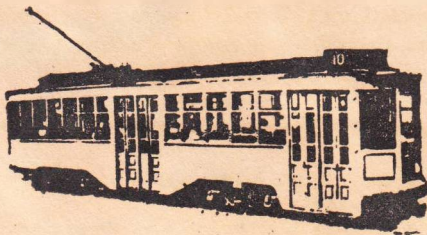
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