

THE CLARION

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Commentary

Learning a lesson

by Mike McGee

I was on my way home from a quad party at Clemson when it happened.

It was about 4 a.m. when we passed Caesar's Head. I was slowly hypnotized by the blur of vegetation and sharp drop-offs as we headed down the mountain.

The steady soothing rhythms of Pink Floyd were clearly flowing through my car, and I was more than half asleep when it began.

My half-closed eyes snapped open with terror as I realized we were going too fast for an approaching curve.

Time stood still for a second as I realized I could do nothing to stop the oncoming disaster.

Then in a pandemonium of screaming brakes, grinding metal and half-heard prayers, we slammed into an embankment.

The car heaved up on one side and then rolled onto its back with a decisive crunch.

I blacked out when the car rolled—and when I finally came to, it was to the screaming voices of my friends.

When my eyes opened I realized that I

was upside down in my car. The first thing I thought was that I was dreaming. This couldn't be happening — but it was.

I got out of the car and began to look at the damage.

We were very lucky because no one was hurt, but it wasn't over yet.

I had to call the police and get a wrecker.

My perceptions were hazed by a long night with almost no sleep. But then the wailing siren of an approaching police car echoed through the valley, and was soon accompanied by a brilliant array of flashing blue lights.

We were separated almost immediately and asked what happened.

Then I was frisked and hand-cuffed to a friend in the back of a patrol car.

At this point I became truly fearful about what could happen to me because of this one stupid mistake.

Even now, almost a month after the wreck I think about it every day. I think about it every time I see a sunset or a sunrise, because I don't know if I would be counting sunrises and sunsets now if I hadn't been wearing my seatbelt.

Corridors

Again
 I have dreamt
 Of corridors winding
 Endlessly circling.
 Light from my candle flickers in the doorways—
 In this room the shadows dance
 With apron-strings and lullabies—
 With saddle-oxfords and alma-motors—
 Dimly, in another
 Echo linked cuffs and the 6 o'clock news.

But too many times
 In the doorways, the
 Black absorbs.
 And the light finds no reflections—
 Not even the memory of a shadow—
 Dancer moves
 On down the corridor
 To find another
 Doorway.
 Hoping that here will be a room
 Where the light can shine and
 Reflect.

April Woods

The Mellon Patch

Column words

no matter what

by Pat Mellon

They say English is the most difficult language to learn. I beg to differ. I've been speaking fluent English, for more than 19 years, and I honestly believe I could talk even before I was born. But I am a man of many tongues. I can speak eloquent Spanish, I can recite the Gettysburg Address in Swedish and Yugoslavian, and I've even been known to mumble some ancient Hungarian proverbs in my sleep. My linguistic credentials are astounding, I assure you.

But we can all speak English. And we can all speak it well. Why, then, is it, (according to people who speak something else, I guess) the most difficult to learn?

Personally, I think Japanese should hold that title. Brevard has its share of Japanese students, and it's given me a little insight on the matter. I'd probably be able to learn how to give birth before I'd be able to learn Japanese. It's a scary language.

Maybe I've seen too many Godzilla movies and Ultraman episodes, but for some reason, I have nightmares about large lizard-like creatures standing at the foot of my bed shooting fire from their nostrils, speaking English while their jaws flap in Japanese.

Maybe the degree of difficulty revolving around the English language has something to do with things that aren't the basic language, like idioms, figures of speech, or cliches.

Try to explain "you are what you eat" to a foreign person.

Why can't you teach an old dog new tricks? Wouldn't an older dog be smarter? And what's a new trick? Let's see...there's shake hands, roll over, play dead and fetch. "Fifi, run out and start daddy's car, would ya'?" That's a good pooch." Let's face it — you can't teach a dog a whole lot, no matter how young he is.

I started saving Wrongs in hopes of making a Right one day. How many do you think it will take? I know two won't do it.

Sometimes it's just the wording of a phrase or the verb usage.



MAKE-UP — You "make up" your face, but you "put on" make up. But a "put on" is a joke, and you can also "make up" your mind. I have this other nightmare where someone slices the top of my skull off with hedge-clippers and puts blush on my brain. But I guess you should "make up" your mind so it looks nice when you change it.

SEX — Why do you have sex, but you make love? (I'm NOT talking about the difference- I'm talking about the wording!) The verb "to have" is usually associated with possession — you have a blue shirt, you have a dog, and you have some mayonnaise in the refrigerator. So, if you have sex, where do you keep it? Also, problems arise with the phrase "Wait a sec." If it takes longer, then it becomes secs, and where do you keep them?

The verb "to make" is generally associated with creation. You make a cake, you make dinner and you make a doll house. So if you make love, when are you done? When have you made love? (I'll move on.)

Let's say a guy flies in from France. He knows a little English, but not much. He rents a car at the airport. He opens the door and sits down in the seat. A light on the dash panel says "Your door is ajar." So this guy goes through life thinking doors and jars are the same thing.

The lady who works in the teller window at the bank starts wearing wild, flamboyant clothes to work. I guess she's making a bank statement.

If someone embarrasses you, you might claim the title of "Laughing Stock." But, if someone doesn't do that, how can you achieve such glory? Can you buy Laughing stock?

Homonyms are confusing too. I always had trouble with to, too, and two, (when I was really young — three or four months) but there are so many others.

Last month, I really got sick. I was in a daze for a while, then I felt weak.

English is a crazy language. I guess I would have trouble learning it if I didn't already know it.

The Message Board

My Dearest Melissa,
 You are one of the sweetest girls I know.
 Don't ever change. Thanks for being such
 a good friend.

Love Ya' Always,
 Alan

Faith and Chris,
 "Looks like a yogurt-kind of weed-end!"
 Love you both,
 Te-Ta

"Billy, go pick up that candy wrapper.
 Aunt Betty's going to start pushing but-
 tons."

Bumper and Shelley,
 "I have been blessed by Mother Nature...
 which is causing me to be a shepherd."
 Love you both,
 Te-Ta

Skeeter,
 Thanks for all of your support in keeping
 the "green man" out of my head.
 Pearl

Kerry,
 I gave the necklace back! Why, did you
 want it?