

Joe Bob's Wisdom on Parade

By **JOE BOB BRIGGS**
Syndicated Columnist

There's this great article in Newsweek about how males and females talk to each other when they hate each other's guts. Like Bob calls home from the office and says "This new secretary we hired last week is one of the nicest people I ever worked with." And then Liz answers, "That's nice." See, what Liz is REALLY saying is, "The slutty little bimbo has her breasts hanging in your face all day or else you'd never even notice the tramp."

This is non-verbal communication. And it's our job as sensitive, feeling human beings to know EXACTLY what people mean when they make LOADED comments like "That's nice." And then, if we do that, we'll stop getting divorced every six months.

Fortunately, I'm an expert at human communication. I always know exactly what Wanda Bodine

means when she says "Joe Bob, did Deke Simpson pay you yesterday or do you have to wait till Friday?" That particular sentence would be translated as follows: "I was watching TV and a commercial for the Abdominizer came on and I don't have the \$19.95 to send in and so I thought I would mooch it off of you."

If you haven't figured this stuff out yet, then you need to, for the sake of your relationship. Here, try this example, and see if you can guess what the person is REALLY saying before you read it.

LUANNE: "I picked your underwear up off the floor again." (Real meaning: "You've got the personality of a rhesus monkey, and I plan to change my hair color tomorrow, go to a singles bar and find somebody better.")

DEXTER: "Thank you, hon. I was so tired last night I just forgot." (Real meaning: "Elephant Hips is on the rag again.")

LUANNE: "Did you remember to get concert tickets?" (Meaning: "I know you didn't get the concert tickets, and I know you DON'T CARE you didn't get the concert tickets, so I thought I'd try to make you feel like the irresponsible slope-headed piece of discount furniture that you are.")

DEXTER: "I was planning to go on my lunch hour today." (Meaning: "You know I'm lying but you CAN'T PROVE IT, and if you try to, you're a bigger bitch than I thought.")

LUANNE: "Have a good day at the office." (Meaning: "Fall in front of a bakery truck and get your head crushed under the rear tire.")

DEXTER: "Love you, honey." (Meaning: "Please, God, get me out of this.")

Okay, now try this non-verbal exercise between two strangers who are just "feeling each other out" for the first time.

JULIAN: "You are DEFINITELY the

hottest girl on the dance floor." ("Do you think maybe you would take all your clothes off later?")

BETSY: "Thank you." ("Why do dorks with patches on their elbows always want to talk to ME?")

JULIAN: "You come here a lot?" ("If I ask first, I can pretend to be whatever you want me to be.")

BETSY: "This is the first time." ("Don't you understand body language, you doofus? Don't you realize my arms are crossed, my legs are crossed, and I'm facing away from you? What do you need, a billboard?")

JULIAN: "I normally don't come to places like this, either. It's not really a very good way to meet people." ("How long do we have to talk like this before you like me? That was a pretty cool thing to say, so I think you should be my girlfriend now.")

BETSY: "Maybe if you didn't have giant nose hairs, someone could stand to look at you for more than two seconds at a time." "No, I guess not."

JULIAN: ("Oh, my God, I don't know what else to say, I'm in silence, seconds are ticking by, there's a huge gulf between us and it's widening, whatever I say right here has got to be incredibly cool or I'll never get to see what she looks like naked, this is your chance, don't blow it.") "Did you drive here in a car?"

BETSY: ("No, I rented a bobsled. I don't know if I can control myself. I'm about to burst out laughing, and if I do, it'll be too embarrassing.") "Do you know where the ladies room is?"

JULIAN: ("What if she doesn't come back?") "It's right over there."

BETSY: "Thank you." ("Hallelujah! Hooooooooooooooooooooooyay!")

JULIAN: "See you later." ("Maybe she didn't notice the car remark. I'll just wait right here. She'll be back in a minute.")

I suggest you keep these examples on a card in your wallet so you're never caught without emotional assistance.

RANDOM THOUGHTS

Ringling in the New Year with proper fruit and Pat Sajak

By **ELIZABETH ELLEN**
Staff Columnist

"Nothing changes on New Year's Day."— U2

So maybe December is not the cruellest month. Consider how bleak the majority of 1989 has been.

Mushy fruit is an annoyance, a faux pas, an oversight in the scheme of things. Fruitcake is even worse, but that's a subject better

left untouched. A proper banana is firm, and its peel is in that twilight zone between green and yellow. A proper apple is green and tart and hard and cold and bites back when you bite into it. A proper peach supports its fuzz, rather like law-abiding citizens everywhere. There is no such thing as a proper kiwi fruit.

Somewhere in the twilight zone between Wilson and Raleigh is the

town of Middlesex. The exit sign off Highway 64 has the double heading of Middlesex and Children's Home, in that order. I used to tell my sister that the Middlesex Children's Home was where they put babies of indeterminate gender. She was terrorized for years.

My roommate is terrified by low octane numbers. The dictionary calls octane an "isomeric liquid paraffin hydrocarbon." But my roommate thinks the numbers refer to a temporal phenomenon, namely the year the gasoline was forcibly extracted from the earth. She claims she doesn't want to buy 87 octane gas because now it's two years old. How she can explain 92 octane fuel is beyond me.

Less rational and more menacing than my sister's orphanage nightmares or my roommate's gasoline fetish is George Bush's flippancy

about money. Yes, he does admit that he feels slightly uncomfortable about spending \$32 million on inaugural festivities while scores of good red-blooded Americans starve on the streets of our cities. But he also says he's not about to apologize for it. Damn the torpedoes, let's party.

At least we have a revolutionary new sleeping aid on the market. In extensive tests lasting a grueling week and a half, the tranquilizer was proven to be very effective, even though it does have some unpleasant side effects. CBS calls it the "Pat Sajak Show." The newest dictionary available calls it a "liquid hydrocarbon isomeric paraffin." George Bush calls it a "kindler, gentler revenue enhancer."

Watch out. Neon colors are coming back into fashion. Those who eat sushi risk ingesting God-knows-what (the bigger the fish,

the further up the food chain, the more concentrated the contaminants). Regular television showed a severely edited version of "9½ Weeks" and called it "7¼ Weeks."

Let me tell a mixed tale of two Dons. It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. Both Dan Rather and Dan Quayle returned to their regular work environments after taking a holiday break. CBS news would again be worth watching except that now Quayle will be making headlines again.

There are some who accuse CBS of taking advantage of the likeness between Quayle and Sajak for the network's own diabolical purposes by switching the two. However, I would call putting Quayle on late-night TV and Sajak in the Senate catbird seat a patriotic act. After all, those hyperactive senators may need a sedative after their \$32 million party.

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