

A Word About Words

A college English professor named Ellsworth Barnard had total strangers tell him to "drop dead" after he delivered a speech on English grammar. In the "New York Times Magazine" (January 27) Barnard lists some of his apparently radical points.

1) "Shall" and "will." The traditional rules were dreamed up by an eighteenth-century pedant who, avowedly disregarding usage, sought to create a "rational grammar." The truth is that "shall" is rarely used except in questions like "Shall we go?"

2) "Who" and "whom." Even educated people get hopelessly confused about these forms, and probably "whom" will eventually pass out of the language. Nobody says, and only English teachers would write, "To whom did you give the book?" We all say, and most people would write, "Who did you give the book to?"

3) "I" and "me," "he" and "him." Nobody ever says "It is I" without feeling uncomfortable. And who has ever answered a telephone inquiry with "This is he" without feeling like a fool?

4) A preposition at the end of a sentence. Everybody knows Sir Winston Churchill's crushing comment to an underling who tried to make a Churchill sentence conform to the nonsensical notion that this construction must be avoided: "This is the kind of arrant nonsense up with which I will not put."

But one of my freshmen, in all innocence, recently illustrated still more vividly the folly of teaching such a rule. Writing of how much he missed his girl friend since going to college, he lamented: "I never stop worrying as to with whom she's kicking up her heels now."

5) The subjunctive mood. This is being replaced in modern English by the indicative. We do not say, or write, "If it be true," but "If it is true."

6) The case of "ain't," in which many people seem to have a morbid interest, is different. Authorities disagree on its status, but Mencken says that "in the negative, whether singular or plural, 'ain't' is employed almost universally "in the common speech."

Barnard makes his point: "Teachers ought to spend their time on matters related to meaning: making sure that the reference of every pronoun is clear; making subjects and verbs (in general) agree in number; writing complete and coherent sentences or using sentence fragments for a specific purpose; putting sentences together so that the emphasis naturally falls on the important idea; using plain, direct, concrete words instead of vague, flowery and redundant words; arranging materials according to some kind of logical pattern and making that pattern clear."

This sounds sensible to me. Other readers respond differently. One called the article "a determined if not very convincing apologia for the slovenly blend of gangster argot and Hollywood patois that now passes for the English language in America."

Another took this angle. "While Mr. Barnard is emphasizing the idea of clarity in communication, our college graduates are still coming forth with such expressions as, 'This is strictly between he and I,' and, 'I done pretty good in the test yesterday.'" Both these sentences express a thought with absolute clearness, yet, is clearness enough?"

Loosening up on grammatical rigidity is, of course, risky. But, as one college student reacted, "If our present-day English courses were rid of the nonsense of 'shall-will' and 'who-whom' and 'I-me,' there would be a marked increase in interest by the student in his English courses."

Beyond The Square--By Carol Campbell

For the troubled souls who saw Ingrid Bergman in *Anastasia* and left the theatre pondering whether the woman she portrayed really was the real Anastasia, the answer has been found at last. In this week's *Time Magazine*, there was an article recalling the events of this mystery and announcing the final solution made a week or two ago by a court in Berlin.

According to the facts in this case, (which differ slightly from the movie) two years after the brutal killing of the Russian Czar and his family in 1918, the half dead body of an unidentified woman was dragged from a Berlin canal who later claimed she was the fourth daughter of the Czar, Grand Duchess Anastasia Nikolaev Romanova.

After being treated in a mental institution for some time, she claimed she had escaped from the men who had murdered her family with the aid of two brothers named Tchaikovsky and had fled into Rumania. Many doubted her story when she said she had married one of the brothers and no Tchaikovsky ever showed up to verify the connection, but there were others who accepted her story as truth.

Even though others claimed to be the missing Duchess, Anne Anderson, as the girl called herself, found many champions and in 1920 she was warmly received by Long Island society. At this time she was accepted by many distant relatives of the Romanova family, but rejected by a near relation, the House of Hesse, who were determined to remain the sole benefactors of the money left in London by the Czar before his death.

In 1941 Anna began her suit against the House of Hesse for her legacy which dragged on until this month. At this time the 83rd Civil Chamber of West Berlin, after studying mountains of testimony and evidence, informed Anna's lawyers that, in their opinion, their client was **not** the Romanov princess and had no claim to the late Czar's estate.

THE NATION

The return of King Saud to Saudi Arabia brought to a close one of the most spectacular visits this country has ever witnessed.

It isn't often that we have a state visitor whose arrival causes a furor unprecedented in the history of New York, brings along a three year old son to receive medical attention for his paralyzed arm

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and leg and is presented with a doctor from Walter Reed Army Hospital to teach the court physicians corrective therapy for his disability, and is accompanied by a retinue of sixty Arabian aids who left even blase Washington agog when they strode into a local restaurant and rang up a \$750 luncheon bill with a \$500 bill and two wrist watches for the tip.

But the real purpose of the visit was to explain the Eisenhower Foreign Policy Doctrine to the king and to promote Arabian friendship. The talks between the President and Saud went well, the King announced that he would personally try to pass on the correct impression to the Mid-East countries and he issued a joint communique with Mr. Eisenhower which stated that Saudi Arabia would agree to give the U. S. a five-year extension of its lease on an air field it built at Dhahron and that the U. S. will give Saudi Arabia equipment to build up its forces.

The real test of King Saud's intentions will be seen in the next few months--if he is able to influence Nasser towards Western alliances or disassociates himself from Nasser and Communism and joins the pro-Western countries of Iraq and Lebanon.

* * *

It looks like the scandal of the Marine Boot Training Camp at Parris Island over the tragic drowning of six recruits in 1955 is about to be repeated. Just after Marine Head Pate told authorities that great progress had been made towards eliminating harsh treatment at Parris Island, a letter was received by the father of Marine trainee David Lee Porter which stated that he had been beaten over the head with a steel bar when he walked into the office of his drill instructor with his hat on. The incident was admitted by camp authorities but they denied the charge that they had employed a steel bar. The case is expected to go to court soon.

* * *

Vice President Nixon, who has been one of our most successful ambassadors of good will to foreign countries since he has been in office, has now been given another mission. Mr. and Mrs. Nixon will leave March 6th to attend ceremonies marking the granting of independence to the Gold Coast in

Africa. This country will now become a member of the British Commonwealth under the new name of Ghana.

THE WORLD

The situation in the Middle East stands pretty much as it did last week. Israel still refuses to abandon two parts of the territory it has occupied since the end of the Anglo-French-Israeli attack fifteen weeks ago--the Gaza Strip and Sharm el Sheikh. They will withdraw from these areas only when it receives a U.N. guarantee against resumption of Arabian raids.

The U. N. tried to push a bill that would place U. N. forces in the two areas but the Arab nations opposed, so there is now a move to force Israeli withdrawal by getting other countries to discontinue all aid to them. The President told reporters that he personally thought that Israel will withdraw, but the United States is pledged to back the U. N. decisions. No solution has been found so far because if the U. S. backs a resolution to force Israel to withdraw no one knows what the Arabian reaction will be.

PEOPLE

When reporters asked Elizabeth Taylor what she had given her groom, 54 year old Mike Todd, in return for his wedding gift (a diamond studded bracelet, earring and ring set valued at \$80,000) she mistily replied, "My eternal love." At what price is this valued, Liz?

* * *

Poet T. S. Eliot returned last week from a three week honeymoon on the French Riviera with his second wife Valerie Fletcher and proved the possibility of a dream held by millions of working girls the world over. Miss Fletcher, you see, is a secretary who married her boss.

* * *

When an outraged lady constituent of New Jersey's Senator Clifford Case demanded to know if crooner(?) Elvis Presley will be permitted to keep his sideburns when he becomes a member of the United States Army, the Senator demanded an answer from the Army. After a brief meeting, the Army reported that on no conditions will Mr. Presley receive special treatment and thus settled one of the nation's most compli-

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Letters To The Editor

To the editor:

Re: "One Big Family"

First, you might be interested to hear some reactions to your clever satire. After supper on Friday someone came to my room and asked me if I'd read the editorial. I said that I had and asked, "What do you think about it?" To my astonishment she said, "I think it's a wonderful idea and I'm just sick that I forgot to sign up tonight."

That was the first time I realized people were really believing it. Then I met a group of girls around the Coke machine. They turned on me suddenly and protested vigorously. "We don't have a whole hour to spend." "I'm certainly not going to like that." Etc. After I explained I was sure the editorial was just a satire they cooled down a little. I don't think people get the point, do you?

If I got the point that it was a satire on the attempt of the I.R.S. to answer the conscious (and unconscious) pleas of the students to break down group barriers, I must protest. Not many people on campus are so self-centered that they are content in a group of eight or nine or so out-going that they have broken down the barriers of the classes and the dorms.

I have seen Salemites at fraternity parties frantically whispering around trying to find out a girl's name that they recognize as a Salemite, but can't possibly introduce. Why? Because she is not in the same class. Usually by the last of your freshman year you know the names of the girls in your class, but outside of that you are lost.

Also, I feel that we should be more like "one big family." With Salem having a student body of only 350 in it, it is ridiculous for one Salemite not to know--even if just by name--everyone on campus. It is a shame for a senior to have to rely on an inquiry, "Well, I think I know the name, but I believe she's a sophomore so I wouldn't know her." Every day I hear someone say, "I'll declare, I've never seen that girl before."

The idea of mixing at one meal a week seems to be a very good one to me. Anyone is perfectly

free to go out to dinner that night if they wish, but someday we must face the public and broaden our acquaintances. Is this not good training for us, too? To use one meal-time a week to eat with someone we've noddled to on campus, then to be able to say, "Hi, Mary," or, "Yes, I know Betty Jones" seems to me the least a Salem girl can do.

Martha Duvall

To the editor:

Is the social honor system working as it should? Despite pleasing surface appearances, I feel that there is still need for improvement.

There may be considerably more evidence of school spirit on campus so far this semester. Upper classmen may be less aware of violations because of their increased privileges. However, I feel that I am safe in saying that illegal overnights are still being taken; that illegal evening engagements are still being taken; and that girls are wearing burmudas under their coats to Sunday night supper and lying to I. R. S. members about having them on.

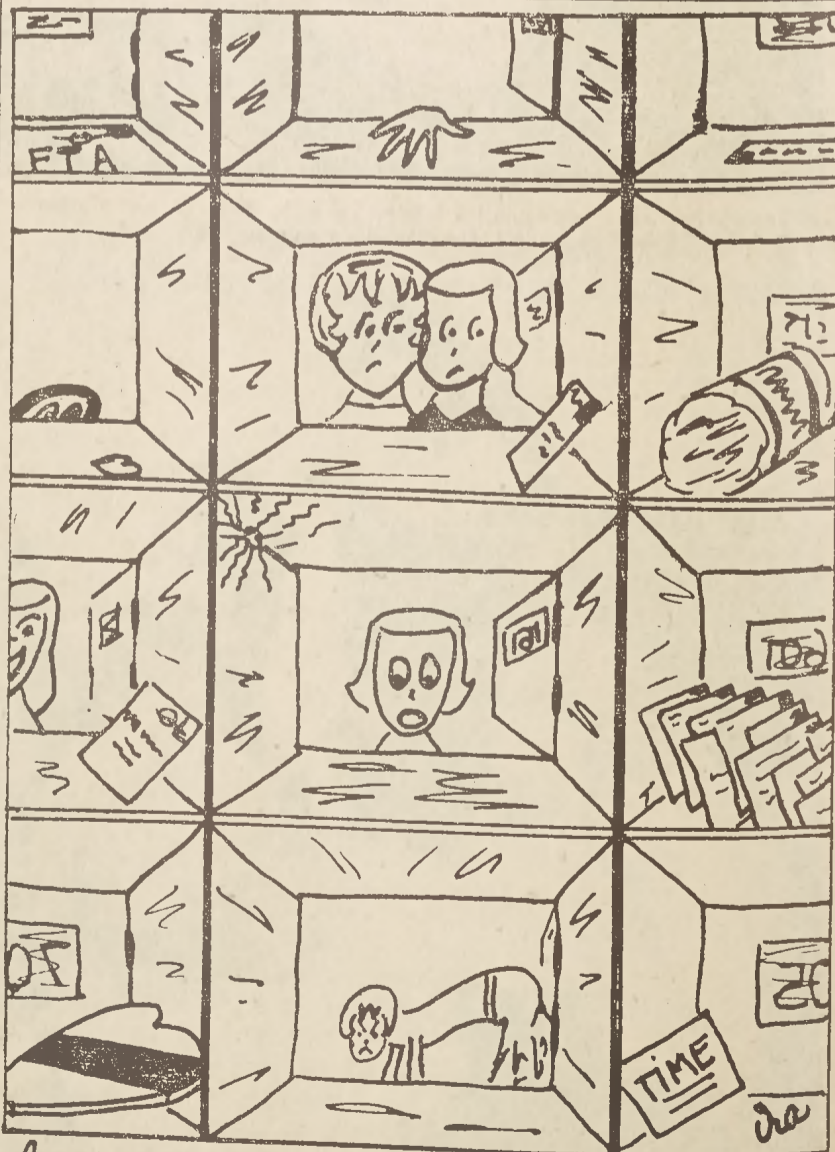
Every year, people indulge in midnight discussions about this problem, but nobody does anything about it. This is not the problem of the administrative council of the Student Government. It is the problem of the student body, the real Student Government. Therefore, the students themselves should solve it.

I feel that increased student participation in the campus activities and that some revision of rules may help the matter.

Needless to say, one girl's opinion is not adequate; therefore, I would like for Judy to place a suggestion box in the Committee Room where students may submit their ideas on the question, "Is the social honor system working as it should?" These ideas should be reviewed by a student council committee and the results should be presented to the student body.

I feel confident that a few people will talk about this sometime tonight. However, I wonder how many will ever take the trouble to place their ideas in the suggestion box.)

—Martha Jarvis



Again the time for all sympathy
Once again that box is empty!
Wha'sa matter? Ain'cha mine?
Don't cha wanna be my Valentine?