

**"Shooting  
Straight  
From  
The  
Lip"**



Gall Roberson

If you've been reading me for very long, you know I speak straight from the heart and lip. There are generally few words in this column that you will have to reach for the dictionary to understand. And, it will stay that way, despite the trend today for a lot of windy jargon. Like you, I'm fed up to the arm pits with mouthfuls of high tech words that not even a Philadelphia lawyer knows what to do with. Just say what you've got to say in plain English and get it over with, the way it was meant to be. Know what I mean?

To prove my point about how bad things have gotten with pen and ink these days, just listen to these examples of pompous, incomprehensible language:

On the door of a government building in Washington, D.C., is the following inscription: "General Services Administration, Region 3, Public Building Service, Building Management Division, Utility Room Custodial." In plain English folks, it means "broom closet." Why in the world couldn't they have just said that in the first place? Of course, we all know how the government is.

But then there was the surveyor who made the following report after surveying some land for an athletic field: "It is obvious from the difference in relation to the short depth of the property that the contour is such as to preclude any reasonable development potential for active recreation." In other words, it just ain't no good place to play ball on.

Some poor fellow went to his bank to borrow some more money, only to be told that his bad debts were "nonperforming loans." Airline flight attendants seek to soothe passengers by describing the life preservers under the seat as "personal flotation devices." Not to be outdone in formal communication, the government once again shows itself by one particular branch that describes cowboys as "mobile mountain range technicians." Good Lord.

Not in a million years would you figure this out on your own: "A carbonate-laminated bovine protein wafer--that is, a homogenized bovine contractile fiber on a bipartite farinaceous comestible capsule with a randomized oleaginous germianl array, is better known as HAMBURGER, folks. On a sesame seed bun, no less. Course, if you want a cheeseburger, then you need to add a little bacterially coagulated lactic secretion. And, I'm not sure I copied any of this correctly.

The time when you called a spade a spade is gone forever. Today it's a "manually-operated humus excavator." But, this new trend in bloated language has teased and taunted us decent folk long enough. Finally, somebody is doing something about it. At last it has been recongnized for exactly what it is...a public nuisance. More than thirty states have now passed laws requiring the use of plain English in consumer documents.

If you don't think such laws are needed, then read this last paragraph to convince yourself as to just what this world is headed for without a bit of language restraint:

In high tech lingo, a plain old doghouse becomes a canine seclusion habitat. Its roof is a canted precipitation deflector, its entrance a quadruped ingress-egress aperture, and listen to this folks...the little doggie's dish is none other than a nutrient uptake reservoir.

Sheez! Know what I mean?

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**Pediatricians Urge End To Corporal Punishment In Schools**

Raleigh, N.C.--The N.C. Pediatric Society today joined the state P.T.A. in calling for the abolishment of corporal punishment in the schools.

"We believe strongly that a dialogue between teachers, school officials, parents and pediatricians can produce a safer, more effective alternative for maintaining classroom discipline, said Dr. George Prince, president of the Society.

Dr. Prince, who is also chairman of the N.C. Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, suggested time-out rooms, restriction of privileges and delayed participation in extracurricular activities as ideas which may merit study.

"I don't pretend to have the magic answer," he said, "but we need to start somewhere. It just may be that the creative rewarding of good behavior is the key to lessening the need for punishment in many situations."

Dr. Prince pointed out that many times it is the same child who is being spanked repeatedly, and said there is no scientific proof that spanking results in improved behavior.

"I asked one eight-year-old patient how many times he'd been spanked in the third grade," he said. The boy's comment was '22 times, but I did not cry once.'

"All too often," he said, "pediatricians see children in their practices who have suffered bruising and injury to soft tissues from the excessive use of physical force in the schools."

Dr. Olson Huff, an Asheville pediatrician, is especially disturbed by the message that corporal punishment sends to youngsters.

"In a world beset by violence," he said, "where anger and violent solutions to problems are the norm, the time has come to change the behavior models for our children. We must begin now to teach them that physical violence does not solve any problems. And to teach that behavior, we must model it in every place available. Certainly, that must be true of the public schools."

A 1984 study of 324 school principals in 18 states showed that corporal punishment was used to discipline students at every grade level in virtually every region of the country.

Only four states--New Jersey, Massachusetts, Maine and Vermont--have outlawed corporal punishment. School board regulations prohibit the practice in Rhode Island and New Hampshire, and Hawaii has had a moratorium since 1973.

School boards in the cities of New York, Washington, Chicago, San Francisco and New Orleans have also banned corporal punishment.

"In North Carolina, the public schools are the only place where it is legal to physically punish people," said Dr. Prince. "It's illegal in our day centers; it's illegal in our prison system, and charges of child abuse are often brought against parents when they administer the same punishment of their own children in the privacy of their own homes."

"I am pleased that the P.T.A. recognized the need to do something about this problem," he concluded, "and pediatricians throughout the state look forward to supporting efforts at the legislative level to ban this potentially harmful behavior."

The North Carolina Chapter of The American Academy of Pediatrics and The North Carolina Pediatric Society are composed of over 600 medical doctors who specialize in caring for children from infancy through adolescence.

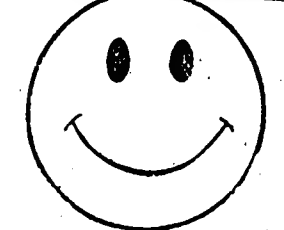
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Craven County's Family  
Weekly Newspaper  
P.O. Box 404/711, Main  
Street Across from Post  
Office in Vanceboro  
North Carolina 28586  
Phone (919) 244-0780  
Publisher, Editor, &  
Business Manager  
R. L. Cannon, Jr.  
Office Manager &  
Circulation Manager

Edith Hodges  
Typesetters

Teddie Hartsell  
June Foote

Layout & Paste Up  
Margaret Ellis

Published

Every Thursday  
Second Class Postage  
Paid at Vanceboro, N.C.

(Permit entered  
March 1, 1978)

USPS 412-110

Subscription Prices

In County Rates  
Single Copy ..... 20¢  
1 Year ..... \$7.32  
2 Years ..... \$11.50  
3 Years ..... \$15.68

Out of County Rates  
1 Year ..... \$8.36  
2 Years ..... \$12.54  
3 Years ..... \$16.72

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