

arts & entertainment

bernstein on words

Hot Licks

By Deb Gray

J. Geils Band/Hotline/Atlantic/\$6.98

Once the J. Geils Band showed promise. *Bloodshot* and *Five Card Stud* were sassy and humorous. But since the band sounds the same as it did eight albums ago, it's also possible that the band is now formulized and predictable.

The formula is something like this: The format uses four chords a song. About halfway through, Geils plays a bombastic solo similar to some lick he's played on another album. Near the end, Peter Wolf wails 16-count screams and heavy-breathes such phrases as "Gonna rock your socks off," in an attempt to emulate passion.

There's the feeling that the guys aren't having fun with this stuff anymore. It's more a matter of grab the bucks while you can and run.

One can not completely devoid of merit is "Be Careful"—straight out of the rhythm and blues tradition that made the J. Geils Band famous. On the other hand, "Mean Love" is a mockery of the blues. Even the screams sound planned.

I understand that the J. Geils Band stages a boogie show to end all boogie shows. That may well be true.



Daily Nebraskan photo

J. Geils, known for his frantic stage strutting, is shown here in a more passive moment. Last night's scheduled performance of the J. Geils Band was cancelled because a band member became ill.

Time marches backward

Plurals of names. The headline read, "Stars, Friends Help the Connors' Celebrate Their Silver Anniversary," which prompted Joseph D. Palumbo of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to ask how to handle the plurals of names ending in s.

As a general rule, plurals of such names are formed by adding s or es to the singular. Following that rule, the headline writer should have made it the Connorses. That form may sound awkward to some people, but they wouldn't blink an eyelash at the Joneses or the Charleses or the Davises.

If adding an es does produce an awkward pronunciation—the Euripideses of drama, for example—or produces ambiguity—the Louises (two girls named Louirs?), for example—the use of an apostrophe is acceptable. Normally, however, one should not write the Smith's.

Question of time. Saying he is "slightly confused," J.V. Williams of Philadelphia asks this question: "If I had an appointment with someone for 3 p.m. and desired to change it to 2 p.m., would I ask him to move it forward or back an hour?"

If you consult Webster's New World

Dictionary, under the adverb back you will find this definition: "to or toward an earlier time." That would seem to solve the problem; you ask to have the appointment moved back an hour.

But wait, hold it. If you look under the adverb forward, you will find this: "toward the front or a point in front or before; ahead." That would seem to give forward the same standing as back. So that's no help.

We shall have to be, and will be, arbitrary: Forward has a real connotation of bringing something closer or causing something to be earlier, whereas back has a connotation of putting something farther away.

Therefore changing an appointment from 3 p.m. to 2 p.m. would be moving it forward.

One other complication should be noted. When you are moving your clock from 3 o'clock to 2, as at the end of daylight savings time, you are moving it back, not forward. Ending the discussion on that note should guarantee you a couple of nights of insomnia.

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