

Theodore M. Bernstein

Kudos for those who use it right

Parallelism. How not to use a conjunction is illustrated in the following sentence: "The National Union, once the most powerful force in Canada, but which was completely shut out in 1973 made a strong comeback." The phrase and which or and who or but which or but who should appear only when a parallel item introduced by which or who etc. precedes it. Thus the quoted sentence should be made to read, "The National Union, which was once the most powerful force in Canada but which was completely shut out. . ."

Praise be. A Mobil ad caused Bob Lundholm of North Wildwood, N.J., to call attention to a misuse that has been taken up here before. The ad said that there are many opportunities to tweak the noses of governmental agencies, then added, "On the other hand, sometimes an agency has a kudo coming." There is no such word as kudo. The word meaning commendation or glory is kudos and its final s misleads many people into thinking it is merely a plural so that they assume the singular is kudo. That assumption is incorrect.

bernstein on words

Clear "whether," slightly cloudy "if." Whether if may be substituted for whether in introducing a noun clause is the question posed by a letter from William Barish of Rydal, Pa. The conjunction whether is the normal word used to introduce such a clause: "I don't know whether I can be there." However, in most similar constructions if is equally acceptable. Nor is its acceptability a recent development; the King James Bible of 1611 used the word in the following sentence, which appears in the modern version thus: "Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground" (Genesis viii, 8). When the noun clause begins the sentence if is not used because it tends to throw the reader off momentarily by suggesting a condition; for example: "If Congress agrees on tax reforms is the subject of a forthcoming article." Likewise, if should be avoided whenever it leads to ambiguity as in this sentence: "The principal asked to be informed if pupils were unruly." Does it mean when the pupils were unruly or whether they were?

Question of number. A Lutheran magazine printed a passage that went like this: "Until earlier this year, the book's whereabouts were a mystery for something like 30 years. . . ." That use of a plural verb with the noun whereabouts "startled" Vern Hansen of Philadelphia, who writes in to ask about it. The noun may be construed as either a singular or plural, but most often—when it refers to a single location—it takes a singular verb. That is what it should have taken in this instance. When the word refers to more than one location it takes a plural verb: "The whereabouts of three missing girls were unknown."

Arthur Hoppe

Radical Irwin discovers he's the (bleep) Establishment

It was ten years ago this month that young Irwin Vamplew was bopped on the head by a nightstick while



ralph



letters

I agree wholeheartedly with the "Opinion" editorial discussing the Union's fling with the budget for its advertising. I'd like to comment further on the spending habits of the university.

It seems to me that when the university plans its budget, it places educational spending behind things like coaches' salaries and advertising the Union. I'm speaking of the new Life Sciences Bldg., which has to open with old equipment and drastic cuts in the building design due to a lack of money and inflation. As Russell Meints said in the article (Jan. 31), "it is not fair." Why does the university feel that it's more important to pad the lining of the wallets of the coaching staff, and allow the Union to spend \$55,000 (so far) than it is to provide better facilities for the students? After all, this is supposed to be an educational institution, not some over-grown country club.

There are some buildings here that beg to be replaced. The Temple and Architectural Hall are good examples. It is sad that when the university gets around to replacing an old building, it "can't find the funds to build needed resources." Funny, they found the funds somewhere when the Union said they needed \$35,000 worth of signs.

No wonder there are Nebraska T-shirts with pictures of Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse. (Ms.) M. E. Wylie

Language lends insights

A lot of furor seems to have been stirred up in reference to Prof. Schach's article on the foreign language requirement in Arts and Sciences. I, for one, would like to stand up for it. The purpose of learning a foreign language is not just so you can look up more books in the library, although that can be valuable. A foreign language opens up new insights into a particular culture and people.

One cannot hope to comprehend the French, Germans, Russians, or others without knowing something of their language. After all, a people is no better or worse than what goes on its mind, and these thoughts and ideas can only be expressed through language. How they are expressed makes up the unique qualities of each language which enable one to better understand the people. Practically, this can be invaluable in government, business, the arts, science, and just everyday life. And if one works a bit, one can gain a working knowledge of a language in 16 credit hours. This basis can be expanded and improved by further study, either here or in the country itself. Remember, "working knowledge" doesn't mean complete fluency. Think of how little English foreigners can get by with here. And comparing foreign language to water-witching is like comparing Algebra to underwater-basket weaving: inane.

Stefan Debnestian

UNL fans boorish

I saw a medium talent UNL basketball team beat a highly talented group of Kansas University players in spite of the UNL team's home disadvantage—that is, its boorish fans. KU looked poorly coached, a bunch of prima donnas driving to the hoop without a thought of passing off to a teammate. UNL played a disciplined brand of ball designed to get the most out of the talent at hand. If the booing fans can't get their kicks by watching classy basketball, let them stay home and watch cops and robbers chase shows (or professional wrestling) on TV.

R.J. Schonberger

Helping hands

I am a part-time student attending classes here. On Monday, Jan. 25, I slipped on the ice outside Oldfather Hall. Several students helped me to the lounge, called for help, got my car and stayed with me until help came. I want them to know I love them all. I did break my leg in three places. The pain they witnessed was real and without their help I don't know what I would have done.

The world is full of beautiful people, several of them touched my life Monday. Thank you!

Suzy Taylor

smashing windows in Berkeley in order to end the war in Vietnam. So you can imagine the elation of his parents when he finally emerged this week from his decade-long coma.

His first words, naturally, were: "Down with the Establishment!"

"There, there, Irwin," said his father soothingly. "Try to keep calm . . ."

"Oh, it's you, Dad," said Irwin. "Well, I don't care what you say. The Establishment got us into this mess in

he added defiantly, "But I don't care what you say, I'm not going to cut my hair."

"It looks lovely, Irwin," agreed his mother. "It's not as long as your father's but . . ."

Irwin seemed to see his father for the first time. "Good grief, Dad," he said, "you look like a hippie pot smoker."

"Not really, Irwin," said his father, smiling. "Oh, we smoke a joint at parties now and then when everyone else is. Or when your sister, Beth, comes to dinner."

Living together

"Well, I'm glad to hear you've finally forgiven Beth for running off with that guy to live in a commune," said Irwin. "But I suppose you forced him to marry her to conform with your ridiculous Establishment conventions."

"Oh, no, Irwin," said his mother. "They're still just living together. Hardly anyone gets married anymore. He's in the insurance business and . . ."

Irwin looked dazed. "But there's no way the Establishment can get rid of its ingrained sexual hangups and realize that obscenity is simply in the mind of the beholder because . . ."

"Don't shout, Irwin," said his father. "Why don't you just curl up with a magazine and relax?"

Unfortunately, the magazine Irwin chose to curl up with was Playboy. He took one look at the centerfold and lapsed back into his coma.

His parents assume he's happier that way, for his final words were a paraphrase of a remark from Pogo. "We have met the Establishment," he murmured as he collapsed, "and they are us."

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innocent bystander

Vietnam. And the only thing to do is admit our mistake and withdraw our troops, even if it means letting the Communists take over."

"Please, Irwin," said his mother, "we already did that." "No (bleep)?" said Irwin unbelievably. Then he caught himself. "Sorry, Mom, to use that four-letter word," he said, "but you know how I feel about the Establishment's irrational prudery."

Everyone says (bleep)

"That's all right, Irwin," said his mother. "Everyone says (bleep), (bleep), and even (bleep-bleep) these days." "They do?" said Irwin, wincing. "That's nice." Then