

Selected Howlers

Typos

A story in the October 9, 1993, *Fairhope* (Alabama) *Courier*, in a *front-page* article headlined “Brick pavers on the way,” described a Centennial project for personalized brick pavers to be placed on downtown streets. The first paragraph concluded: “We’ll let you know just when this is planned; I’m sure you’ll want to be on hand to watch your special *prick* being laid into place.” This edition of the *Courier* was the talk of the town!

The above-mentioned pavers continued to cause trouble. The *Mobile Register* obituary of Janet Carr Hildreth (d. May 7, 1999) said: “Her aunt, Katherine M. Carr was a resident of Fairhope and was one of the first memorial bricks to be placed in front of the Eastern Shore Courier.”

“Currently Nguyen serves as president of the Golden Bear Band, secretary of the National Honor Society, secretary of Mu Alpha Theta, a math society, and as sales manager of the *Literacy Magazine*.”
Fairhope Courier, March 20, 1996, pp. 1A, 12A

“*Demoninations* pursue unity.”

Headline on Religion Reporter Pamela Long’s column, January 18, 1997

Computer Follies

(*To err is human; to really mess things up, you need a computer.*)

“Cutline goes here for this photo.
Cutline goes here for this photo.”

Cutline for a photo of Eugene Walter, *Mobile Press Register*,
March 15, 1996, p. 1-E
(The photo credit read “Photo credit.”)

“This is a fake cutline. Once we get the picture shot, developed and scanned in, then we can write the cutline so that it makes sense.” (First impression: Is the fake cutline a new tactic like the quarterback sneak?)

Cutline on a football photo, *Fairhope Courier*, September 25, 1999

“To begin the wedding ceremony, Mrs. Kitty Stanford, sang ‘When Lo extended down illusion netting sleeves. The finger-tip length veil cascaded from a sequined and beaded crown.’”

The Birmingham News, September 8, 1996, p. 11E

“One of the greatest persons I ever knew was a teacher—my mother, public and private, for 85 years.”
Jimmy Faulkner, “Mumblings,” *Gulf Coast Newspapers*, September 4–5, 1996

“Baldwin County Farmers Federation Scholarships Available. Applicants of parents must be members of Alabama Farmers Federation.”

Portion of ad in *Fairhope Courier*, April 10, 1996

Essential Grammar

“I, along with many Daphne citizens, are becoming very alarmed about the state of Daphne’s condition and its potentially extensive financial involvement with developers.” (I are? And is that the condition of the State of Daphne?)

Lon Johnston, speaking to the Daphne City Council,
quoted in *Baldwin Register*, May 17, 2000, p. 1.

“The grammar rules every professional must *now*,” “*Sic* key rules for subject/verb agreement,”

“Commonly misused words and how to use *then* correctly.”

Subjects to be taught at a “Mistake-Free Grammar & Proofreading” seminar
(\$125 per person); flyer circulated to Oregon forestry personnel, June 8, 2000

“They must know the law almost as good as an attorney, have excellent interviewing, editing and interviewing skills...” (This statement could have used some editing skills.)

Max Hansen of Baldwin Legal Investigations, quoted by Christmas McGaughey in “Where the Soil Meets the Sea,” *Baldwin Register*, June 18, 2000

Diction

Long Words

“I just took something *androgynous* to the area, a shrimp, and fashioned it with a master artist’s idea in mind.”

Artist describing her design for the Fairhope Arts & Crafts Festival T-shirt, quoted in an article
from the March 16, 1995, *BPR A&C* tabloid

“The people are just wonderful. I go to Lady of the Gulf Church and they let me become an *accolade* there.”

Quote from Carl Haas, featured snowbird, *Baldwin Register*, February 4, 1997

“196 B.C. The Rosetta Stone is created. The four-foot-long basalt stone contains three forms of writing: Egyptian in hieroglyphics on top, *demonic* writing in the center, and Greek on the bottom.”

“An era of invention,” *Electronic Publishing*, February 2001, p. 6
Excerpts from *Publishing Timeline 2000—A Chronology of 2600 Publishing and Graphics Arts Events*, by Richard Sasso

“Craig Dyas, Trentino developer, said the granite pavers, which comprise the road surface at intersections, are both *anesthetically* pleasing and helpful in the mitigation of water runoff from the streets.”

Oakland L. Childers, “Trentino cobblestones get OK from city P&Z,
Fairhope Courier, December 4, 2002

Short Words

“Mendoza dreamed of starting her own computer *softwear* business.” (Let’s get comfy!)

Parade Magazine, June 23, 1996, p. 11

Instructions for determining the proper bra size: “Measure *snuggly* around your rib cage.” (Then you’ll be ready for some of that softwear.)

Mobile Press Register, January 2, 1997, p. 4D

“We’d like to thank the honest person who turned my lost Discover card into the receptionist, Eloise, at the Riviera Centre.” (Money may not buy happiness, but just think of the possibilities if credit cards could be converted to office staff or other needed human beings. Shades of mail-order wives!)

“Applause,” *Baldwin Press Register*, April 26, 1996

“Granted, city sewage is expensive. But I would be glad to pay more if it could be assured that it would not back up into my bathtub every time it rains.” “One question I wish someone at the water board could answer: Why are we paying a sewage fee anyhow? After a good rain the sewers still spill over into our creeks and tributaries and pollute the water. So what are they doing with all of this sewage fee that they are collecting? Surely if they were improving on the sewage, it wouldn’t spill over.” (Hard to imagine sewage so “improved” that one would be willing to pay top dollar for it.)

“Sound Off,” *Mobile Register*, September 29, 1997

In the newsletter of the LSU Real Estate Research Institute, the new editor asks readers to “Please *bare* with me as I climb the learning curve of newsletter production.”

“I would like to applaud Alvin’s Island. During the Shrimp Festival in Gulf Shores they had free parking for handicapped people, and being a *handicap*, it was wonderful.”

“Applause,” *Baldwin Register*, October 15, 1997

“I have not watered my yard this summer because of the drought and to conserve water. Nonetheless I see wasteful businesses and residents with their misguided sprinklers watering the hot asphalt. Is the appearance of our yards more valuable than our water supply? We are so *short-sided* and selfish.”

“Sound Off,” *Baldwin Register*, July 24, 2000

“With few *descending* votes, new members will be billed twice a year.”

Edley Jones, *Rotary Rogue* (weekly bulletin of the Rotary Club of Vicksburg, Mississippi), August 10, 2000

Food Words?

“Her favorite medium at one time was egg *tempura*, but she changed to watercolor” (presumably because it wasn’t so greasy).

“Artist’s Statement,” exhibit at Eastern Shore Art Association, Fairhope, Alabama

“Michael J. Fox’s growing pains: People who buy movie tickets don’t want to see him play adult *rolls*.”

Headline in the October 8, 1993, *Mobile (Alabama) Press Register*

Warning to stray deer: “All meat smoked on sight.”

Ghep’s Smoke House ad in Gulf Coast Newspapers, September 1995

A recipe for “Consume Rice” calls for “1 can beef consume.”

Gulf Coast Newspapers, March 20–21, 1996, p. 8C

“A food court at the St. Joseph Medical Center in Kansas City, Mo., offers a variety of items to suit anyone’s *pallet* with 10 food and beverage stations.” (Obviously an all-you-can-forklift buffet.)

Cutline, *Mobile Press Register*, July 2, 1996, p. 7B

“A little salsa and *meringue* have put fire into many a ceremony headed toward a fiesta.”

Amy Elliott, “It’s OK to jazz up the music,” *Mobile Register* Spring Bridal Guide, February 18, 2001, p. 4.

Weddings and Funerals

“The bridegroom is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Cellilli Jr. of Belle Meade, N.J.”

Wedding announcement, *Mobile Register*, June 15, 1997

“The couple has three children: Mr. [actually Dr.] and Mrs. Craig Sheldon Jr. of Wetumpka, Col. and Mrs. Robert Martin of Honolulu, Hawaii and Mr. and Mrs. Greg Shepard of Chapel Hill, NC.”

Cutline on a 60th wedding anniversary photo of Mr. and Mrs. “Shep” Shepard, *Fairhope Courier*, October 28, 1998

“Joseph Alfred Florian Chandonnet, a native of Lowell, Mass., a resident of Mobile, residing in Fairhope, died Wednesday.”

Baldwin Register, March 6, 1997

“He also taught with the Odyssey Elder Hostile program at the university.”

Kim Lanier, “Longtime USA professor, Dendinger, dies at age 71,” *Mobile Register*, June 16, 2001.

“Ellen W. Styron, 63, died Monday, July 23, 2001, at a Pensacola hospital. Born in Glasgow, Scotland, she was a native of Tiree Island, Scotland, and was a resident of Loxley.”

Baldwin Register, July 24, 2001

Fuzzy Thinking

“Haven’t You Always Wanted A Bedroom Like This? Now You Can!”

Price Furniture ad, *Fairhope Courier*, August 18, 1999

“Did you know that 80% of women wear the wrong size bra...Are you?”

Gayfers ad, *Mobile Press Register*, March 1996

“Easy answers to teen-agers’ questions are difficult, he said.”

Susan Southworth, “Get to Know/Rick Fennig,” *Baldwin (County, Alabama) Press Register*, April 3, 1995

“Latin, Asian and Mediterranean peoples have long known that contemporary medical researchers have discovered naps are very good for us.” (Time travel?)

“Get a blanket...take a nap,” AP story in undated *MPR*

NOTICE: THE CITY OF FAIRHOPE WILL HAVE NO GARBAGE, RECYCLE, OR TRASH SERVICE ON FRIDAY, JULY 3, 1992. CITY RESIDENTS WHO ARE ON FRIDAY’S ROUTE FOR GARBAGE, RECYCLING AND TRASH WILL BE PICKED UP ON THURSDAY.

Fairhope Courier

“Neither Shannon nor Twigga’s previous pen mate, Tattoo, are the fathers of the new giraffe.”

“Zooland experiences population growth, *Fairhope Courier*, March 23, 1996

Nelson had been a postal inspector for 20 years. “I enjoyed it tremendously,” he said. “The last 13 years I was there, I was responsible for internal thefts in the states of Minnesota, North and South Dakota and Wisconsin.” (Seems like his *boss* would have been “disgruntled.”)

Snowbird profile, *Baldwin Register*, March 2, 1997

“When a rural Swedish woman set out some sunflower seeds, she attracted the wildlife she expected—but not the kangaroo that showed up.”

Mobile Register, May 14, 1997, p. 2A

“The governor has made a complete 90-degree turn from his original promise to downsize government and have no more taxes.”

“Sound Off,” *Baldwin Register*, January 19, 1998

“She may have been *born in Missouri*, but Melinda Slauson has the take-charge mindset that characterizes many in her home state of Texas. These days, the *Dallas native* and stay-at-home mom’s attention is focused on ensuring that the latest of a series of fund-raisers for Bay Minette’s Community Kids Park Project—Pig Out for the Park—is a success.”

Susan French Cone, “Get to Know,” *Baldwin Register*, June 20, 2000

“No one sunset is alike.”

Delores Lyles, quoted by Joni Plomp in “Nature along the Gulf Coast intrigues this ‘shooter,’” [Get to Know] *Baldwin Register*, September 15, 2000

Misplaced Modifiers

The agent we would all like to have: “I just had to tell you what good fortune your wonderful software program, Plots Unlimited, has brought me. After rewriting my first novel, a romance/thriller, for three years (and collecting a foot-high stack of rejection slips), a New York agent has finally taken my book.”

Testimonial letter in a Plots Unlimited ad, *Writer’s Digest*

“Clad in a bright pink robe and matching slippers, Mrs. Brock’s white hair was perfectly styled.”

“Most Beautiful Girl Della Brock turns 101,”

Mobile Register, June 12, 1997, p. 1B

“You’ll meet remarkable people from all walks of life [such as] Carolyn McCarthy, whose husband was shot in the Long Island Railroad massacre and was recently elected to Congress on a gun-control platform.” (McCarthy was fatally shot; his widow was elected to Congress.)

Direct-mail flier from *Biography* magazine

“Ms. Chennell also is helping the center raise \$10,000 for more furnishings by donating a platinum diamond cluster ring she once wore for a raffle.” (Is this on a par with the used car that never left the garage except to drive to church on Sunday?)

“Woman funds elegant décor for new center,” *Baldwin Register*, November 16, 1997

What the well-dressed architect is wearing this season: “Tammy Smith was there with great friend and architect Craig Roberts in a stunning velvet cocoa sheath with a mottled scarf.”

“Susie’s Parlor, *Mobile Register*, November 20, 1997

“At the age of 13, her father died and the family moved to Mobile.”

Joni Plomp, “Get to Know: Edna O’Brien,” *Baldwin Register*, January 29, 1998

“Born in what is now the Czech Republic, her mother died when she was only 3 years old.”

Joni Plomp, “Get to Know: Bess O’Conner, *Baldwin Register*, August 24, 1998

“Throughout the summer, Mount Vernon offers special guided tours of Washington’s gardens and grounds, which depart from the bowling green three times each day.”

Mount Vernon: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow, Summer 1998

“We’re in disagreement with him [the prospective bridegroom, who jilted the writer’s daughter] right now because we feel that total reimbursement for all deposits should fall on his shoulders, most of which are nonrefundable or, at the very best, contingent on rebooking.”

“Miss Manners,” June 2000

“Signs of summer are everywhere: The ants have started holding regular conventions in my sink, insect legs and lizard tails are lying around the house that the cat has dismembered from her victims...”

Amy Chavez, “Japan Lite,” June 2000

Headline Follies

“Stapleton girl in stable condition after fatal wreck.” (Well, yes, there’s hardly any condition more stable than death.)

Headline in the June 14, 1992, *BPR*

“Man shot by pedestrian in critical condition.” (Who knows what he might have done if he’d been in better shape?)

Headline in the November 16, 1991, *MPR*

“Tyson blames timber industry on slow business.” (I guess that’s better than blaming it on the defenseless trees.)

Headline in *Baldwin Today* (Gulf Coast Newspapers), October 19–20, 1988

“Thirsty South in store for more dry times, government reports.”

Headline, *Mobile Register*, May 17, 2000, p. 5A.

“Deputy car hits another, killing 2.” (Two cars? These actually seem to be autonomic cars: the deck head says, “Sheriff says cruiser was in pursuit of vandalism suspects...” Look, ma! No hands!)

Headline, *Mobile Register*, May 17, 2000, p. 1A.

Say Again?

“Permit me to say that I could not possibly fail to disagree with you less.”

Letter to the editor, undated *MPR*

“There is not a day that goes by that I don’t wake up not excited to go to school and teach at Bayside.”

Joseph Pollock, quoted in Teacher Feature, *Mobile Register*, June 29, 1998, p. 5B

“I am a very senior citizen of Baldwin County and have been the majority of my life.”

Letter to the editor, undated *BPR*

“Retiring chairman of the music department since 1982.” (Perhaps his replacement will be more outgoing!)

Thomas B. Harrison in an article on Andrew Harper’s retirement,
Mobile Register, August 22, 1999

“The Maids of Jubilee is the only Mardi Gras society featuring female horses on horseback.” (Now, now, if you can’t say anything nice...)

“Maids roll Friday at 7,” *Eastern Shore Courier*, February 26, 1992

This is one of my all-time favorites: “Motorists traveling along County Road 27 know what this sign is all about, having just hit a series of speed bumps approaching the intersection at County Road 104.

Pools will open Tuesday at 8 p.m. and close at 7 p.m. We remind you to do your duty and get out and vote.” (Or swim, or find a time warp, or something.)

Cutline on a picture of a sign saying “Vote for who removes bumps,”
undated *Eastern Shore Courier*