

communique'

A guide-nouveau speak for those bewildered

By R.W. Greene
Of The Print

Edwin Newman still gigs for NBC News, although the last thing we saw him doing was the mid-morning news for the "David Letterman Show," where he occasionally succumbed to snickers while parrying Letterman's feeble wit and watching the show go down the tube, so to speak.

Newman made a name for himself, however, with two best-selling diatribes against what he saw as the desecration of the English language. In "A Civil Tongue" and "Strictly Speaking," he poured out examples of jargon, obfuscation and bullshit, and became a minor-league celebrity himself, and made a lot of money.

Most of us realize, of course, that Newman is yelling up a rainspout packed with leaves. Most of us grew up hearing "maximizing the number of students, of 'free pupie's" and most don't notice; language seems passe' compared to the hurly-burly of the videocassetterecorder world. Tom Peterson, after all, cuts a more passionate, if offensive, figure than Edwin Newman.

Still, new idioms can come crawling out of the basement into your own speech with bewildering speed, leaving you wondering how you just said "all-right" (with that curious maniacal lilt at the end of it) more times in the last hour than you said "and." We present two of what we have found to be the most trend-setting forms of speech.

"I Went..."

This is a brash young sapling in the forest of the English language, but which burns like much deader wood. "I went..." has replaced all kinds of verbs like "said," "replied," "argued," "spat," "told him he

was full of it," and so on. You can hear vast monologues in this style, thus:

"so, anyway, we were at this party, and I saw her and I went wow. And she goes, like, hey. So I go over and she goes do I want to check out the coats in the bedroom, and I go wow."

"I went...", however, can have infinite variations to it, by using the ubiquitous Onomatopoeia. This handy little device, which we think comes from watching 10,000 Saturday morning cartoons, can be inserted easily in place of any adjective or adverb with stunning effects, e.g.:

"So I saw the little saucer coming out of the left side and I went blam. and then another sucker comes out the right side and I go thwack, but then I can't turn in time, and rock hits me, and blngghh, and I lost." Or, sometimes used to describe the indescribable passions:

"I tried to tell her that it just wasn't working out and she goes anhh, and I look at her and go unnhh, so anyway we're gonna do it Saturday. Bring some Cuervo or something."

Or feelings of utter frustration:

—Editor: "I tried to tell him that he doesn't know what he's talking about but he just went nngghh."

—Writer: "He tried to tell me I was full of it and I just went nngghh."

—Another Editor: "I listened to those guys arguing and just went nngghh."

—Another Writer: "NNG-GHH."

"You are...I am..."

This syndrome, though far from unusual, is a far subtler shade of beast. It is not so much grammatical as spiritual:

—No. 1: "So anyway, I'm moving this summer."

—No. 2: "Yeah, I had an aunt once that moved."

You see how it works. People who talk in "you are...I am..." are convinced that everything you say is about them. It is impossible to persuade them otherwise; if you try, they stand around looking at you with hostile, bovine gazes.

But the cerebral leaps sometimes approach the sublime:

—No. 1: "I hear Reagan's a junkie."

—No. 2: "Let me tell you about this Columbo I bought once..."

Sometimes the switches can bring you to the point of pulling a knife. You can go into a long spiel about how you're flunking algebra, and they will nod their heads, say humph in sympathy, and turn around and say:

"Yeah, I know. Of course, when I got my four-point, I didn't have the slightest trouble with the quadratic formula."

As hard as all this may be to master, we urge dedication and practice. You may be pleasantly surprised:

—No. 1: "Do you think they'll sell me a half-bowl of spaghetti?"

—No. 2: "Hey, my roommate just got back from LA and we're having a coke orgy. Wanna come?"

feedback

Denny Smith cares not

To The Editor:

If you are concerned about nuclear power plant safety then you must be concerned about the actions of Congressman Denny Smith.

The Gannett News Service reported on April 10th that Smith is pressing for immediate licensing of 12 nuclear plants prior to adequate review by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission of safety problems brought to light by Pennsylvania's Three Mile Island nuclear accident.

In 1980, Oregon voters expressed their concern over dangerous wastes produced by nuclear plants.

If citizens are going to be forced to live close to nuclear plants and risk their property and the financial integrity of their local utilities by participating in the federal nuclear



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Like wow! An editorial for the mellow

People are really weird, man. Like, I don't really dig why everyone is having vocal orgasms over so many things. Things like Scientific Creationism, man. I can see what all the brouhaha is about, but like why is everybody shouting at the top of their lungs, man? They're nothing but two theories, yet they've been taken to court, and all those things. Everyone is running around screaming like pompous fools saying that they're only one's right.

Like what's the sweat, man? What's wrong with just waiting until the experts come to an agreeable theory as to how the world was created/evolved? Until then like, we could say to the students, "Like, we're here man, when we come up with

something, we'll tell you hokay man?" That'd be cool man.

I know it's spring, man. But like that's no excuse to scream. I know romance is in our thoughts, or at least in mine, man. Like with creation, the good guys eventually become a higher form of beings, ya know? With evolution, man is going to evolve into a higher more mellow being, too. So what's the sweat, man?

I guess tonight they're having some sort of debate about all this stuff. Like, why a debate man? Why can't they have a rap session like the ones we have in the lounge? We have fun in the lounge because someone doesn't always have to be right or wrong.

Like it's all relative anyway man.

program, then they are entitled to adequate safety requirements.

It will be interesting to see Smith's response to requests from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission Chairman Joseph Hendrie to allow nuclear plant operation licenses prior to public hearings. Government needs to hear more, not less, from the people.

Many voters supported Smith because they felt he would listen to them. Now, we see Mr. Smith took a 'deaf-ear' to Washington D.C.

Sincerely,
Representatives
Bill Bradbury
Margie Hendriksen
Wally Priestly

Johnson bad? I'll argue that

To The Editor:

After reading R. W. Greene's article ("ASG Wastes

money on Speaker" April 29), I couldn't help wondering if maybe there were two different Kerry Johnsons. The Kerry Johnson that I listened to was extremely helpful, especially with his informative talk on hidden communications. He not only spoke about how often hidden communication is used, but he also explained how it could be applied to work and school.

If R. W. Greene didn't learn anything from Mr. Johnson's speech, then I'm sorry. Personally, I would like to hear more lectures on hidden communication. Mr. Johnson clearly wasn't here just to sell his cassette tape series. I can remember Mr. Johnson recommending other books that he had found to be enlightening.

Sincerely,
Paul Nastari
Student

Clackamas Community College

staff

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