

Musings...

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It seems such a long time since the ASTTI General Meeting in May, yet when I last wrote *Musings...* the AGM was still two weeks away. The highlight of the event was the awarding of an honorary membership to Mireille Moosbrugger, in recognition of her many years of devoted service to our Association.

It was also the occasion when I announced my intention to resign as “Directrice de publication” of *Hieronymus*, at the end of this year. For many reasons, I feel the time is now ripe to hand over the reins to someone who can bring in new ideas, and who has the enthusiasm and drive to take the journal on to new heights.

Photos of the AGM, courtesy of Philippe Callé and João Ferreira, can be found on pages XX. Other photos will soon be available on the ASTTI website at www.astti.ch.

The next important event in the ASTTI calendar is *Equivalences*, which this year will take place in Bern on 21 November. The one-day seminar will focus on the subject of LA TRADUCTION ET L'ÉCONOMIE / DIE ÜBERSETZUNG IN DER WIRTSCHAFT.

Food for thought

- Least said is soonest disavowed.
- Opportunities always look bigger going than coming
- Light travels faster than sound, which may explain why some people appear bright until you hear them speak
- Artificial Intelligence in no match for Natural Stupidity
- $111,111,111 \times 111,111,111 = 12,345,678,987,654,321$

English logic?

From the absurd to the ridiculous, here are a few “non-senses” to challenge your knowledge:

How long did the Hundred Years War last?

Which country makes Panama hats?

From which animal do we get catgut?

In which month do Russians celebrate the October Revolution?

What is a camel's hair brush made of?

After what animal are the Canary Islands in the Pacific named?

What was King George VI's first name?

Where are Chinese gooseberries from?

What do starlings and silver have in common?

All done? Check your answers at the end of *Musings...*

Thoughts on aging

Growing old is mandatory; growing up is optional.

It's frustrating when you know all the answers, but nobody bothers to ask you the questions.

Wisdom comes with age, but sometimes age comes alone.

Today's mighty oak is just yesterday's nut that held its ground.

Pungent wit

Although puns usually solicit a groan, one has to admire the punster's mastery of the language. So groan on...

A bicycle cannot stand alone because it is two-tyred

Time flies like an arrow, fruit flies like a banana

A backward poet writes inverse

In democracy it's your vote that counts, in feudalism it's your count that votes

A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion

If you don't pay your exorcist you get repossessed

With her marriage, she got a new name and a dress

When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds

The man who fell into an upholstery machine is fully recovered

A grenade thrown into a kitchen in France would result in Linoleum Blownapart

A plateau is a high form of flattery

When you have seen one shopping centre you have seen a mall

Santa's helpers are subordinate clauses

Acupuncture is a jab well done

Marathon runners with bad footwear suffer the agony of defeat

What's the definition of a will? (It's a dead giveaway).

Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead to know basis.

Every calendar's days are numbered

[My thanks to David Pulman]

Yet another "English is an easy language..."

THE CHAOS

Dearest creature in creation,

Study English pronunciation.

I will teach you in my verse

Sounds like corpse, corps, horse, and worse.

I will keep you, Suzy, busy,

Make your head with heat grow dizzy.

Tear in eye, your dress will tear.

So shall I! Oh hear my prayer.

Just compare heart, beard, and heard,

Dies and diet, lord and word.

Sword and sward, retain and Britain.
(Mind the latter, how it's written.)
Now I surely will not plague you
With such words as plague and ague.
But be careful how you speak:
Say break and steak, but bleak and streak;
Cloven, oven, how and low,
Script, receipt, show, poem, and toe.

Hear me say, devoid of trickery,
Daughter, laughter, and Terpsichore,
Typhoid, measles, topsails, aisles,
Exiles, similes, and reviles;
Scholar, vicar, and cigar,
Solar, mica, war, and far;
One, anemone, Balmoral,
Kitchen, lichen, laundry, laurel;
Gertrude, German, wind, and mind,
Scene, Melpomene, mankind.

Billet does not rhyme with ballet,
Bouquet, wallet, mallet, chalet.
Blood and flood are not like food,
Nor is mould like should and would.
Viscous, viscount, load, and broad,
Toward, to forward, to reward.
And your pronunciation's OK
When you correctly say croquet,
Rounded, wounded, grieve, and sieve,
Friend and fiend, alive, and live.

Ivy, privy, famous; clamour
And enamour rhyme with hammer.
River, rival, tomb, bomb, comb,
Doll and roll and some and home.
Stranger does not rhyme with anger,
Neither does devour with clangour.
Souls but foul, haunt but aunt,
Font, front, wont, want, grand, and grant,
Shoes, goes, does. Now first say finger,
And then singer, ginger, linger,
Real, zeal, mauve, gauze, gouge, and gauge,
Marriage, foliage, mirage, and age.

Query does not rhyme with very,
Nor does fury sound like bury.
Dost, lost, post, and doth, cloth, loth.
Job, nob, bosom, transom, oath.
Though the differences seem little,
We say actual but victual.

Refer does not rhyme with deafer.
Foeffer does, and zephyr, heifer,
Mint, pint, senate, and sedate;
Dull, bull, and George ate late.
Scenic, Arabic, Pacific,
Science, conscience, scientific.

Liberty, library, heave, and heaven,
Rachel, ache, moustache, eleven.
We say hallowed, but allowed,
People, leopard, towed, but vowed.
Mark the differences, moreover,
Between mover, cover, clover;
Leeches, breeches, wise, precise,
Chalice, but police and lice;
Camel, constable, unstable,
Principle, disciple, label.

Petal, panel, and canal,
Wait, surprise, plait, promise, pal.
Worm and storm, chaise, chaos, chair,
Senator, spectator, mayor.
Tour, but our and succour, four.
Gas, alas, and Arkansas.
Sea, idea, Korea, area,
Psalm, Maria, but malaria.
Youth, south, southern, cleanse, and clean.
Doctrine, turpentine, marine.

Compare alien with Italian,
Dandelion and battalion.
Sally with ally, yea, ye,
Eye, I, ay, aye, whey, and key.
Say aver, but ever, fever,
Neither, leisure, skein, deceiver.
Heron, granary, canary.
Crevice and device and aerie.

Face, but preface, not efface.
Phlegm, phlegmatic, ass, glass, bass.
Large, but target, gin, give, verging,
Ought, out, joust, and scour, scouring.
Ear, but earn and wear and tear
Do not rhyme with here but ere.
Seven is right, but so is even,
Hyphen, roughen, nephew Stephen,
Monkey, donkey, Turk, and jerk,
Ask, grasp, wasp, and cork and work.

Pronunciation--think of Psyche!
Is a paling stout and spikey?
Won't it make you lose your wits,
Writing groats and saying grits?
It's a dark abyss or tunnel:
Strewn with stones, stowed, solace, gunwale,
Islington and Isle of Wight,
Housewife, verdict, and indict.

Finally, which rhymes with enough--
Though, through, plough, or dough, or cough?
Hiccough has the sound of cup.
My advice is to give up!!!

This poem first appeared in *Drop Your Foreign Accent - Engelse Uitspraakoeeningen*, by G. Nolst Trenite (5th rev. ed., H. D. Tjeenk Willink & Zoon, 1929). Dr. Gerald Nolst Trenite (1870-1946) was a Dutch observer of English.

[My thanks to Thomas Fallgatter]

Administratium

A new element has been discovered, which is called "Administratium". I am sure that those of you who work in large organisations will already have come across it, even if its name cannot yet be found in any reputable English dictionary.

A major research institution has recently announced the discovery of the heaviest element yet known to science. This new element has been tentatively named "Administratium." Administratium has 1 neutron, 12 assistant neutrons, 75 deputy neutrons, and 111 assistant deputy neutrons, giving it an atomic mass of 312. These 312 particles are held together by a force called morons, which are surrounded by vast quantities of lepton-like particles called peons.

Since Administratium has no electrons, it is inert. However, it can be detected as it impedes every reaction with which it comes into contact. A minute amount of Administratium causes one reaction to take over 4 days to complete when it would normally take less than a second.

Administratium has a normal half-life of 3 years; it does not decay but instead undergoes a reorganization in which a portion of the assistant neutrons and deputy neutrons exchange places. In fact, Administratium's mass will actually increase over time, since each reorganization causes some morons to become neutrons, forming isodopes.

This characteristic of moron-promotion leads some scientists to speculate that Administratium is formed whenever morons reach a certain quantity in concentration.

This hypothetical quantity is referred to as "Critical Morass."

You will know it when you see it.

Theory of relativity?

"Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler."

- Albert Einstein

Infonet

WordReference is a handy dictionary function that can be used in two ways: as an online dictionary to find the meanings of words, or as an add-on browser tool for translating words in Web pages. The dictionaries used are from the HarperCollins collection, and comprise Spanish-English-Spanish, French-English-French, Italian-English-Italian, and German-English-German combinations. There is also the respected Collins English Dictionary. With the dictionary function, you simply type in a word to obtain an immediate definition, while all you need to translate a word on a Web page is to highlight it, then click the right mouse button to choose the target language you want from the menu. It's that simple. The service is free and you can be downloaded from: <http://wordreference.com>

Answers to "English logic?"

- How long did the Hundred Years War last? 116 years: 1337-1453.
- Which country makes Panama hats? Ecuador.
- From which animals do we get catgut? Sheep and horses. There are several theories about the origins of the word, one of them being that it comes from the German word "*kitgut*", the name for a small fiddle. Other explanations and anecdotes can be found at: www.ku.edu/~medieval/melcher/2002/03/msg00016.html
- In which month do Russians celebrate the October Revolution? November.
- What is a camel's hair brush made of? Camel hair does not come from camels at all. It is found in watercolour and lettering brushes and usually is made of squirrel, goat, ox, pony or a blend of several hairs, depending on the desired softness and intended cost of the brush. For definitions of a whole range of brushes, see <http://www.dickblick.com/info/brushhair>
- After which animals are the Canary Islands in the Pacific named? Dogs - after their Latin name *insulae canariae*, or "islands of dogs".
- What was King George VI's first name? Albert; his full name was Albert Arthur Frederick George.
- Where are Chinese gooseberries from? New Zealand. The *Actinidia chinensis* is actually a climbing vine native to China. It has been grown extensively in New Zealand, one of the world's main exporters of the fruit, since the fifties, hence its other common name "kiwi".
- What do starlings and silver have in common? Sterling silver got its name from the marks first stamped on coins made from the precious metal in early England. In the era of Edward the Confessor, the royal mark was four birds, similar in shape to starlings. Some coins also used stars as marks, creating a more obvious link, but starlings themselves are thought to have received their name from their winter plumage, which features a starred or speckled pattern. In Old English, the words for star were *steorra* or *steorling*. [www.ucalgary.ca]