

NEWSLETTER

Massachusetts Association Of Teachers Of English To Speakers Of Other Languages

VOL. 15, NO. 2

WINTER 1987

CATESOL President tells us. . .

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF CONFERENCES

It saddens me when I hear people express disappointment in a conference on the basis of the presentations they attended. Admittedly I used to judge a conference by the quality of the sessions I attended and leave with the same feelings, but I've changed my focus and now every conference is a professional and personal high for me, even when I'm not able to attend a single session. Because our state conference is coming up, I have decided to devote this last letter to a few remarks about my views on conference going.

The first conferences I went to in California were somewhat lonely affairs for me because I hardly knew anyone. Even during the sessions I found myself worrying more about whether I would have anyone to eat the next meal with than what the speaker was saying. But I continued to attend every conference until eventually I knew so many people I didn't have to be alone unless I wanted to be.

In time I began to discover that the conversations I was having with people were providing as much professional stimulation as the sessions I was attending. Now I no longer go only for the presentations. I go for the people. I go to meet old friends and to make new ones. And while I still go to presentations, I now choose the few I go to so carefully that I am rarely disappointed.

WHICH PRESENTATIONS TO GO TO

I begin by looking at the names of the presenters for each session because I know that some are worth hearing no matter what the topic. I then carefully read the abstracts of the sessions that sound interesting to make sure that there is something new for me, that the presenter seems sufficiently knowledgeable about the topic, and that the theoretical assumptions of the presentation are not contrary to my own, (e.g., I wouldn't go to a presentation on teaching verb tenses out of context.)

Once I've chosen the presentations that appeal to me, I rank order them. This enables me to move quickly from one room to another if the room is full or if the session proves to be disappointing.

If a presentation has excited me, I try to compliment the speaker afterwards or in the hall later. I've found that establishing rapport, however briefly, with those whose ideas have stimulated my own thinking increases my enjoyment of a conference a great deal.

When there are no presentations I want to go to or what I've gone to hasn't worked out, I usually go to the book exhibits or find someone to have coffee with. But even at the book exhibits I spend most of my time talking to people — publishers reps I've gotten to know over the years or conference friends I run into. I also look at new books, but I save time by asking others what they've seen that looks good.

THE CROWDED ROOM FULL OF STRANGERS

One of the worst aspects of a conference for me is finding myself in a large room filled with people enjoying themselves, none of whom I know. Although I'm never in this situation at ESL conferences anymore, I sometimes am when I go to a non-ESL event. Over the years I've developed a couple of strategies to handle this uncomfortable situation.

One is to walk around as if I'm on my way to another part of the room, all the while looking for a familiar face. When I find someone I know even slightly, I walk up and stand beside the person no matter how many people he or she is talking to. Then I just stand there looking interested. If

I'm ignored, I walk away. Since technically I haven't asked to join the group (because I haven't said anything), I can walk away without feeling (too) rejected. If someone in the group includes me by looking at me as they speak, I know I'm "in."

If this ploy doesn't work, I look around for someone else who's standing alone and introduce myself. My favorite conversational gambit is "Oh, I see you're from ----. Where do you teach there?" or "Have you been to any particularly good sessions?"

USING CONFERENCES TO GET JOBS

At present I don't want or need another job, but if I did, I'm sure the contacts I have made at conferences would be invaluable in my search for one. Taking advantage of the Job Opportunities service provided by the conference committee is a must for those looking for work, but the importance of networking cannot be underestimated. While it's true that the chances of getting a position directly as a result of informal conversations at conferences are slim, they do pay off in the long run for those who are good at what they do.

A direct question put to a potential employer can be a way of finding a job,
(continued on page 8)

Spring Conference Plenary Speaker Chosen

Susan Stempleski, a native of Cambridge, Massachusetts, will be the plenary speaker at the MATSOL Spring Conference on Friday, April 3, 1987. Ms. Stempleski has taught ESL and trained teachers in France, Turkey, and the United States for more than 20 years. As a consul-



Susan Stempleski

tant for the United States Information Agency, she has developed materials for teaching English through video and conducted teacher-training courses on the uses of video in language teaching, most recently at a Fulbright-USIA sponsored seminar in Istanbul. Currently on the faculty of the International English Language Institute of Hunter College of the City University of New York, she has also taught ESL at Columbia University, Harvard University, and in the Boston Public Schools.

Ms. Stempleski holds an M.Ed. in Bilingual/Bicultural Studies from Boston State College and is a doctoral candidate in the TESOL Program at Teachers College, Columbia University. A frequent presenter at TESOL and its affiliate conventions in Canada, Mexico, and the United States, she is a former President of MATSOL (1976-1977). She is co-author of *Getting Together: An ESL Conversation Book* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich) and *Explorations: Reading Skills in English* (Macmillan).

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**THE MATSOL
NEWSLETTER**

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This is a quarterly publication for the members of MATSOL. Subscription costs are included in annual dues. Letters, articles, black and white photos and other contributions are welcome. They may be sent to:

Carol Pineiro
CELOP/B.U.
730 Commonwealth Ave.
Boston, MA 02115

Articles should be typed and double-spaced. Please include bio-data.

Next deadline: April 1, 1987

FROM THE PRESIDENT

On December 15th, board members representing MABE, MaFLA, and MATSOL met with the new Commissioner of Education, Harold Reynolds, Jr. at his office in Quincy. The purpose of the meeting was to present each of our association's goals, share our concerns about language education and bilingualism in general, and to discuss possible statewide plans and resources which would help us reach our common goals. We were all delighted to find that Dr. Reynolds not only supports our efforts to make second language/international education a statewide priority but that he is also willing to discuss a proposal to establish a language policy Task Force. The MATSOL board welcomes your input and we will keep you informed about State Department decisions.

Collaborative efforts of our three organizations began a year ago and last June the "first in the nation" joint symposium was held at SMU. This year we are very excited to announce another "first," a week-long Summer Institute for public school foreign language, ESL and bilingual teachers in July. The institute, funded by the State Department of Education, will offer workshops in (1) 1st and 2nd language acquisition methodology, (2) curriculum development which is culturally embed-

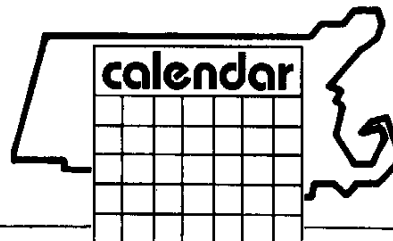
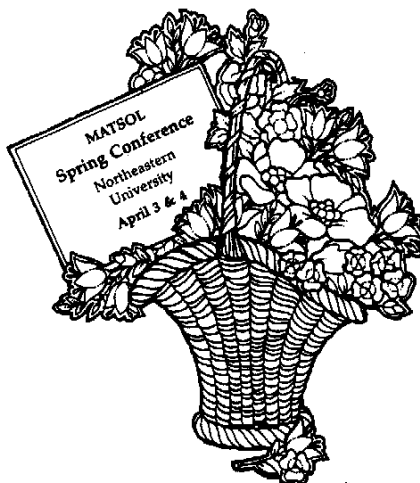
ded, (3) methodology for teaching culture, (4) development of positive attitudes toward native and second language culture, (5) integration of language learning in total school curriculum, and (6) public relations for the concept of bilingualism. Demonstration classes making use of new curriculum methodologies, student-peer teaching and teacher-team teaching will also be offered. Details and application forms for the institute are in the mail to all members of the three organizations. Coordinator of the Institute is MATSOL's own Suzanne Irujo. Spearheading the entire collaborative effort is Gilman Hebert, MABE President.

Before I pass the gavel on to the very capable Mary Christie, I have to say that MATSOL continues to be a vital and dynamic organization. This year, in addition to the two conferences, the symposium, the winter and regional socials, and the job bank, we established the Rick Smith Lecture Series, took action on important legislation, and compiled the results of the employment questionnaire (which will be presented at the Spring Conference and published in the next newsletter.) My best wishes and thanks to all. You have made my term as president a very rewarding one.

Judy DeFilippo

Special Interest Groups

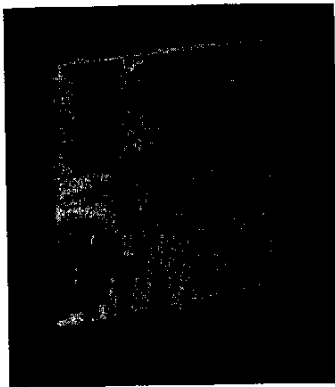
A session will be set aside at the Spring Conference for the SIGS (EI/Sec, Adult, Higher Education, CALL, and others) to meet and discuss issues that are important to them. The Conference Planning Committee would like to hear your ideas on how you would like this time spent (hour, theme, format). Also let us know if you would be interested in helping coordinate a SIG session. Please contact: Mary Christie, ESL Director, Pine Manor College, 400 Heath Street, Chestnut Hill, MA 02167.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR:

- MCTE SPRING CONFERENCE
Thursday, March 23
Sheraton Tara, Braintree
- MATSOL SPRING CONFERENCE
April 3 & 4
Northeastern University
- TESOL CONVENTION
April 21-25
Fontainebleau Hilton, Miami
- PETER STREVENS
Tuesday, April 28
Boylston Hall, Harvard
- CALL INSTITUTE
Friday, May 29
Northern Essex Community College

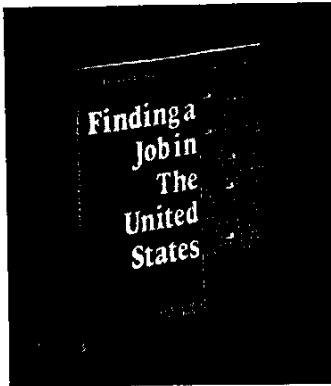
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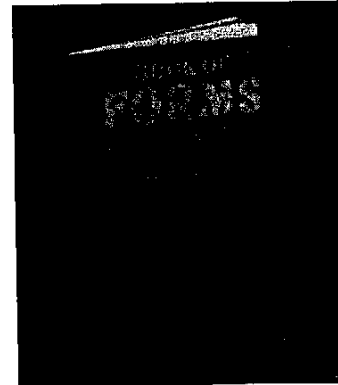


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PORTS OF ENTRY: ETHNIC IMPRESSIONS

by Abelle Mason, 1984. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers.
San Diego, California 92101 (viii + 139 pp., \$9.95)

Reviewed by Shirley Braun, Queens College, CUNY

Ports of Entry: Ethnic Impressions, first in a series of three volumes by Abelle Mason (the other volumes are *Ports of Entry: Social Concerns*, 1985 and *Ports of Entry: Scientific Concerns*, 1986), includes works of original fiction, non-fiction and poetry, written by a multi-ethnic group of authors. Among these authors are Maxine Hong Kingston (Chinese), Langston Hughes (Black American), William Saroyan (Armenian), and Richard Rodriguez (Mexican). Mason selected the ten passages because each deals with some personal aspect of the effort to reconcile two cultures in the process of accommodation to American society, from the least acculturated to the most Americanized and from the 19th century to today. It includes selections of biography, memoirs, interior monologue, oral history, and a character sketch. The selections range in tone from lightly affectionate to ironic to profoundly moving.

Students will do more than just share the authors' experiences, though, when they work through *Ports of Entry: Ethnic Impressions*. They will learn cross-cultural concepts like assimilation, culture shock, lifestyle, alienation, first generation, sense of identity, and belonging. A section in each chapter headed "Understanding the Ideas" provides questions for discussion about the cultural issues. For example, these questions follow the selection from *The Hunger for Memory* by Richard Rodriguez:

At the school, one of the nuns said to the young boy, "Richard, stand up. Don't look at the floor. Speak up. Speak to the entire class, not just to me!" Think about your early education. What kind of behavior did your elementary school teachers expect from you? For example, did they expect you to stand up when you answered a question they asked? Did they expect you to address the whole class?

A pre-reading paragraph for each passage stimulates students' curiosity and links it with the other chapters. This one precedes the selection from *The Woman Warrior: Memories of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* by Maxine Hong Kingston:

Like Rodriguez, Kingston was also a youngster whose native language was not English. She also faced the problem of speaking up in English in school. She too was trying to establish her own sense of identity. Keep in mind the title and subtitle as you read. What kind of battle is this warrior fighting? Who is the enemy? Who are the ghosts?

Further cross-cultural activities include role-plays, skits, brainstorming and round-robin composition.

Besides introducing cultural concepts, the book presents literary concepts such as

characters, narrator, point of view, chronological order, and literal vs. figurative meaning. This material brings a rich dimension to ESL courses in developmental reading while preparing the way for English Department course work.



Abby Mason, author of *Ports of Entry readers*

Most important of all, *Ports of Entry: Ethnic Impressions* advances reading skills. Intensive reading is emphasized in the first seven selections and extensive reading in the three longer passages. Some intensive-reading questions involve grammatical structure and stylistics. For instance, the exercises for the Thomas Whitecloud selection discuss the use of sentence fragments, of parallel structure, and of repetition of words and phrases. Here is how Mason encourages students to consider the significance of parallelism:

Paragraph 9 has a set of two parallel sentences, each starting with a very strong phrase. What is a phrase? Can you make a connection between the feelings the author shows here and those of self-condemnation present in paragraph 6?

An exercise on sentence fragments follows. Other structure-related questions involve indirect objects, verb tenses, modifiers of whole sentences, and proofreading.

Vocabulary development is enhanced by exercises such as the following: paraphrase sentences with idioms like *bent on* and *take hold of* and then write an original sentence for each:

Choose three of the following qualities and, using examples, indicate how each describes the author's state of mind at a particular point. For example, take the quality of "shame." When does the author feel this way? What are the circumstances? Does this feeling change over the course of time?

shame	dumbness	stubbornness
courage	obedience	disobedience
fight	enjoyment	self-disgust
humor	intelligence	bewilderment

Besides close-reading skills, *Ports of Entry: Ethnic Impressions* develops extensive reading skills such as skimming, scanning, getting the facts, understanding the plan of the passage, exploring the ideas that unify understanding the specific events, and getting an overview of the protagonists' life. Throughout the book there is practice in grasping the main idea, inferring, drawing conclusions, and citing direct statements.

The exercises in the book are wide-ranging, varying from one chapter to the next. Thus, the book also helps develop strategies for writing sentences, paragraphs and essays in addition to skills of reading. An extra bonus is the sporadic material on pronunciation, like the note on features of rhythm, stress, and pitch which help elucidate the poem by Langston Hughes. (One might wish that Mason had included more of this excellent material throughout the book.) Other useful features include a pronunciation key, an appendix of grammar and usage, indexes, a list of abbreviations used, a bibliography of ethnic readings, and an answer key.

With its handsome print and poignant illustrations, *Ports of Entry: Ethnic Impressions* is a beautifully designed book. The wide margins make a spacious background for the glosses of important new terms (printed in boldface type in the text). The book is slim and comfortable to handle. In every way, this is the type of reader that ESL students grow fond of and cherish.

Shirley Braun, author of *Life in English*, teaches ESL at the City University of New York. (Reprinted from the TESOL Newsletter, October, 1986.)

Congratulations to . . .

Ellen Kisslinger and Michael Belanger on the birth of their son.

Carla Meskill on the birth of her daughter. CELOP on the opening of their new computer lab.

The following authors on the publication of their books by Addison-Wesley:

Elsa Auerbach and Nina Wallerstein, *ESL for Action*.

Judith DeFilippo and Daphne Mackey, *Grammar Plus*.

Ruth Pierson and Susan Vik, *Making Sense in English*.

Catherine Sadow and Edgar Sather, *Talk Radio*.

Robert Saitz and John Kopec on the publication of *Milestones* by Little, Brown, and Co.

PAGES # 5 & 6 MISSING

(continued from page 6)

consensus on classroom tasks (dictation, true/false, listening exercises). They had narrow purposes at first and strict time limits always; they were completely student-run. Japanese business style is to reach consensus individually among group members and then get together in a meeting to affirm the consensus that has already been reached. In Japan, a meeting is not the place for real discussion, disagreement, or debate. Therefore, students had a very hard time with a western-style meeting where discussion, disagreement and debate are expected and encouraged. A Japanese business person might give an unfavorable impression if he or she did not actively participate in these ways. My students' first meetings were dreadful: no one spoke up or was assertive, no one would get to the point of the disagreement, and they could never complete the task within the given time limit. With time and practice, students became much more "westernized" in meetings, and seemed to enjoy taking on this role within the classroom. Of course, instructors always emphasized that we were exposing them to western culture and business style as a means to an end, but not endorsing it as the way to do business.

Each student had to give a class presentation at the end of four weeks. The presentations focused on some aspect of their job — from aluminum manufacturing to letters of credit. For the students, this was the most challenging aspect of the course, and pro-

duced a fair amount of anxiety. I would work with students outside of class on developing their ideas, and some class time would be spent on fundamentals of western-style presentations — introductions, using the pointer, using visuals, maintaining interest, answering questions at the end. Presentations were video-taped, and later I would go over the video with students privately. Generally, the students felt some dissatisfaction with seeing themselves on tape but this was outweighed by the sense of accomplishment of giving a ten-minute presentation in English.

Much important intangible learning went on outside of the classroom, though. For many, LIOJ was their first substantial and sustained contact with westerners. They had to overcome shyness in talking with instructors. They had to learn how to make small talk and participate in conversation at the table during meals. They had to learn, often by trial and error, which were acceptable conversation topics.

Some evenings were planned especially for giving students experience in specific situations. For example, there was always a cocktail party. Class time was spent on what goes on at a party, the idea that you should mill around and meet different people, how to politely end a conversation, what the drinks are called and what people commonly drink, and other aspects of social culture. Most Japanese have little idea of what mixed drinks are; they usually have a beer or whiskey. They were sur-

prised that beer is not usually served at cocktail parties. A list of drinks was handed out in class, and during the party many students would just go down the list — a screwdriver, a margarita, a gin and tonic, etc. The next day, they usually better understood why they had been cautioned not to mix drinks!

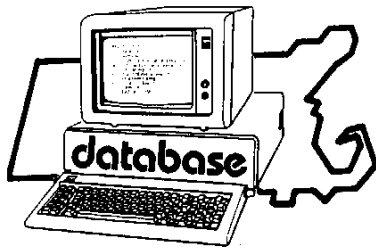
The intensive nature of the program placed many demands on the instructors, but I found it to be a very enriching experience. I sometimes felt that I was learning as much about my students' culture as they were about mine. They gave me insight into their way to view the world as well as their approach to business. We parted with a mutual respect and new understanding.

At the end of the summer, I left LIOJ for the small town of Gotemba at the foot of Mt. Fuji where my husband could study with a pottery master. There I taught at a small private language school, and my students ranged from kindergarten kids to factory workers and young adults. The program couldn't have been more different from LIOJ, but it opened a new chapter on living in Japan. There *we* were immersed in Japan: the culture, language, lifestyle and people, and at the end of our time, were very sad to leave.

Jennifer Bixby is an editor of ESL textbooks at Addison-Wesley Publishing Company in Reading, MA.

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CLUE IN (Regents/ALA) and **THE GAME SHOW** (advanced Ideas)

At the 1984 TESOL Convention, Ferreira, Sklar, and Kagan gave a presentation on adapting commercial software for language learning. This was my first introduction to **The Game Show**, and since then, Regents/ALA has come out with **Clue In**, which, though designed for language learning, adopted essentially the same concept.

Both programs are games in which questions are put to students and clues given, one by one, to prompt the answers. Both come with starter games, but both are really meant to be adapted to individual situations, and accordingly, both include authoring features that allow for easy input of clues and responses.

The games differ in details of format. **The Game Show** closely emulates the old TV game show. A moderator and two contestant interrogators are shown on the screen and converse in cartoon bubbles (one person can play alone). The moderator asks the contestants' (students') names and then prompts a category. When this is selected, one interrogator presents a statement to which the first student partner must type a response. If that student misses, then the other cartoon contestant provides a second clue to which the second student attempts an answer. The game proceeds until someone guesses the word or phrase the computer is looking for or until the clues are exhausted. At the end of the game, the player with the most points wins.

This format differs slightly from that of **Clue In**. First, **Clue In** is played by one lone player either at his/her own pace or against the clock. The latter mode allows more points, which is useful if the player wishes his or her score registered in the Hall of Fame, where the three highest scores for that disk are kept permanently for conspicuous display. Second, players select a correct answer from three possibilities. Selecting a correct answer eliminates frustration over insignificant errors in a typed-out response (along with opportunities for active production), and which narrows the response set (which could be anything up to 36 characters in **The Game Show**).

In **Clue In**, the player has only two chances to guess the correct answer. This is done as follows: on being given the first clue, the player is challenged to attempt an answer. If the challenge is accepted, then the three possible answers are displayed, but these may be ignored. The point value is then decreased, a second clue is displayed, and the challenge is repeated. If the player

Two games that succeed. . . with a little outside input

accepts the challenge at this point, he/she will likely find that one of the possible answers is no longer logical, but that it is still a matter of guessing between the remaining two. Declining the challenge until the third clue is the safest strategy since that clue should distinguish the correct answer from the two incorrect ones.

For adults, the games are initially enjoyable, but both suffer from two disadvantages: (1) question presentation is strictly linear, and (2) the quality of any game (hence motivation for playing it) depends on the thought that has gone into preparing the clues. The first of these, strict linearity, means that the games are both programmed so that for any given category, play will proceed in exactly the same way each time, with the same questions and corresponding clues presented in identical order. The ability to achieve seemingly infinite variety through random selection from a copious database is one advantage distinguishing computers from other instructional media, but neither of these games has this feature. Adult learners find that the novelty of the presentations quickly fades once the game proves to be predictable. The success of these programs, therefore, depends on the ability of teachers (or the students themselves) to come up with numerous variations.

On the other hand, my observations of children using these games suggest that youngsters appreciate the security of predictable linearity. Young learners, who find the formats of these games highly motivating, enjoy the advantage over the computer that knowing the answer gives them, and these learners will play one game over and over if they like the subject matter.

As pointed out by Ferreira and her colleagues, such games are best utilized in ESL when students themselves prepare the questions. Either of these games would lend itself well to this purpose. The authoring programs are transparently easy to use, and the games can easily be created, eliminated, or changed later. Such an activity would likely cover several days or class periods. At least one period would have to be devoted to preparing appropriate clues, and perhaps another to collaborating on which clues to use. Another period would be devoted to input, and still another to reaping the reward of playing each other's games.

In summary, I recommend both programs, subject to the constraints mentioned above. Both are professionally presented and are particularly motivating for children. With adults, their effectiveness will be attenuated by repetition unless fresh exercises are constantly introduced via the authoring system. One imaginative way to use the programs is to have the students themselves create and key in the lessons

and to try them out on one another. Used in this way, these programs would contribute to a student-centered, collaborative setting for learning.

Excerpted from a review by Vance Stevens of Sultan Qaboos University in the CALL-IS Newsletter, December, 1986.



Foreign TA Interest Group

At present there is no forum in which people who are training foreign TAs can share their experiences, materials, administrative perspectives, and insights on helping foreign fledgling teachers cope with conducting classes in American universities. I would therefore like to work toward creating a special interest section in MATSOL devoted to the training and advising of foreign TAs. If you are interested in forming such a special interest section, please contact me:

Gregg Singer
CELOP/Boston University
Boston, MA 02215
Tel. 353-4872 or 497-6720

CATESOL ON CONFERENCES

(continued from page 1)

especially if the question doesn't put the person in an uncomfortable position. When I was much younger I found two teaching jobs through conferences simply by asking if any were available. In one case the person I asked had been a teacher of mine at another school, but in the other case I had only just met the man. How I had the nerve to ask him on a crowded elevator if he needed any teachers at NYU that summer I don't know, but I did and it worked. In fact I once hired a teacher myself who asked me the same question as we were walking out of a presentation I had just made at a CATESOL conference.

PUTTING IT ALL INTO PRACTICE

Our April conference will give me an opportunity to put all this into practice once again — to meet old friends, make new ones and expand my network. I hope you enjoy the conference as much as I know I will.

June McKay, President, California TESOL (Reprinted from the CATESOL NEWS, March, 1986.)



Compounding the Crime

While English no longer has as rich a power to form compounds as some other Germanic languages, it still has the power to create simple compounds. The most productive compound-creating structures in modern English seem to be noun+noun (*Irangate*), adj+noun (*lite-rock*), noun+adj (*life-affirming*) and noun+verb+agent morpheme (*husbandbeater*). These word-creating formats, further, follow the usual morphotactic rules that, in English, enable us to distinguish between a lighthouse keeper and a light housekeeper.

There is, however, a set of compounds which either only incidentally follow word formation rules or do not follow them at all. Because these words seem to be little parts of sentences which have, over time, become words in their own rights, I would like to call them sentential compounds. The most obvious examples of these are among the conjunctive adverbs and, indeed, most if not all polysyllabic conjunctive adverbs are sentential compounds. Consider the following "where" words: *whereas*, *wherewith*, *whereby*, *wherefore*, *whereinto*, *whereof*, *whereupon*, etc. Each of these words asks the reader to consider it as a shorthand form of an entire syntactic structure. An even better example of a sentential compound is *albeit* which combines a pronoun/subject (*all*), a subjunctive verb (*be*), and a pronomial complement (*it*) in order to convey its meaning.

A more interesting strain of sentential compounds, though, is that in which clichés or formulaic locutions have grown into full-scale words. Many of these are mere nonce words which, because of their visibility have somehow stuck in the language. *Whodunit*, *sticktoitiveness*, and *metooism* are examples of this. It is important to note, though, that these words have achieved canonical status despite their not following in any identifiable way the usual rules for English compounds. We should also note that these words are so "wordlike" that they do not usually even require hyphens.

An even greater class of clichés is so close to word status that its members can stand, albeit with hyphens, as words. The most productive category of this phenomenon involves the agentive affix *er*. Whereas it may have taken the wags some time to characterize Charles Lindberg as an *American-firster*, in but the drop of a hat anti-abortion types were christened *right-to-lifers* and their opponents *pro-choicers*. Advocates of getting tough with the Russians have, since the fifties, been called *cold-warriors* and, by a wonderful interpenetration of popular culture and back-formation, supporters of the so-called Strategic Defense Initiative are now

dubbed *star-warriors*. It would seem that proponents of any slogan could be tarred with this brush, but I suspect that phonological rules bar some such locutions. For example, *back-to-basicsers* and *bomb-em-back-to-the-stone-agers* seem to me to be impossible in English. The latter, though, may not be a phonological problem, because *golden-ager* seems to have obtained currency.



The Outgoing (he hopes) Grammarian

A number of clichés, though, have attained near-word status. Consider the following sentences:

He's a real stick-in-the-mud.

There is this down-and-outer in my neighborhood who makes more money cadging cans than I do teaching.

She's a real can-do type of person.

My mother is a dyed-in-the-wool Congregationalist.

Pat Buchanan is nothing but a Johnny-come-lately.

He's a good-for-nothing bum.

It's just a fly-by-night outfit.

She's nothing but a runaround.

No goody-goody-two-shoes need apply at NSC. Many more similar structures exist and many more will so long as English speakers feel playful about their language.

During WW II, the military's proclivity for acronyms was foisted on a good part of the American population. Many Americans responded by creating acronyms of their own. The only one of these to have achieved such widespread acceptance as to be no longer rendered in capital letters is "snafu" (*situation normal; all fucked up*). Let us not, however, consign the following acronym/compounds to the dustbin of history: FUBAR (*fucked up beyond recognition*), FUBB (*fucked up beyond belief*), JANFU (*joint army navy fuck up*), TARFU (*things are really fucked up*), FUMTU (*fucked up more than usual*) and FUBIS (*fuck you buddy; I'm shipping (out)*).

In this category, but not of it, is the wonderful religious acronym BOMFOG (*brotherhood of man, fatherhood of God*). It is used to indicate the rote recitations of pious clichés as in:

The chaplain delivered the usual BOMFOG, and then we ate.

Though the historical evolution of English has severely restricted the compound-forming rules for the language, speakers of the language have not taken this lying down. May compound words blossom as do the hundred flowers of spring.

REQUIEM FOR A LIGHTWEIGHT

As I asserted last issue, I would like to retire from writing this column. Like everyone else, I would much rather read a usage column than write one. It is someone else's turn to write and my turn to read. Surely our mother tongue is sufficiently grand and yet embattled that someone out there in MATSOL-land feels confident enough to leap into the lurch. If you would like to become MATSOL's new recreational grammarian, please submit prospect to the editor of the MATSOL newsletter. Good-night Mrs. Calabash, wherever you are.

Please send any cavails, kvetches, or treasures to me and I shall forward them to the next recreational grammarian:

Gregg Singer
CELOP/Boston University
730 Commonwealth Ave.
Boston, MA 02215

Special Lecture

Mr. Peter Strevens of the Bell Educational Trust and Wolfson College, Cambridge, U.K., a leader in the English as a Foreign Language field and President of their international association, has been selected as a Distinguished Fellow for the Fulbright 40th Anniversary Year. By courtesy of the United States Information Agency and the Board of Foreign Scholarships, Mr. Strevens will be giving a *special lecture* arranged by the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures and the ESL Section at Harvard.

TUESDAY, APRIL 28th
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