

Living Arts

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Too true?
Publisher withdraws
new David Leavitt
novel, saying it
wrongly
appropriates the life
of Stephen Spender.
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DIANE WHITE

Talk radio's hair-curling language

MAY HAVE TO GIVE UP listening to talk radio in the car because I keep hearing things that make me miserable for a pen and paper so I can take notes. One of these days I'll cause an accident.

The other day I heard a caller say, "The games tell you a story that will curl your hair."

"I've never curl my hair," said the talk-show host, to his credit I thought, because most of the time they let these things pass, and no wonder. If they bothered to correct the callers' English they wouldn't have time to talk about anything else.

I confess that I split my share of inoffensiveness. I've been known to misuse the occasional prepositional phrase. I deliberately use constructions I know are wrong because they look or sound less awkward than the correct version. I'm not a language purist like my friend Beverly Derr.

She comes by it genetically. "When I was a little girl I'd knock on the door and my teacher would say, 'Who is it?' and I'd say, 'It's me,' she wouldn't let me in," Beverly says.

Those days that might be construed as child abuse, but it stood Beverly in good stead at Girls Latin School, where she and I learned, among many things, that there is no excuse for a sentence such as "I saw the Kingsway State Building walking down the street."

Beverly used to teach English. Now she keeps a notebook in which she records mistakes in the language. "I corrected papers for 10 years, and I can give it to you," she says. "I'd myself to stop because I'm driving myself crazy, but then I'd see or hear something and not consult the notebook, I can't help it."

Here are a few examples taken from her notebook and from all the odd little pieces of paper—old envelopes, receipts, deposit slips—I find strewn about my car.

• "Aggression," for agreement, as in, "I'm in agreement with that."
Why not, "I agree?"

• "Pitiation," for pity, as in, "I don't need your pitiation." Perhaps you remember the movie and the song, "A Town Without Pitiation."

• "Authoritary," for authority, as in, "I'm not an authoritary on English usage."

• "Controversially," instead of controversy, as in, "With all the controversially yelling around Michael Jackson..." Beverly swears she heard this word drop from the well-formed, well-edited lips of Diane Sawyer. Can't be true!

• "Frustrated," for frustrated, or maybe frustrated, as in, "I got so frustrated by mistakes." I find of like this one. Maybe it will catch on.

• "Retaliate," for respond, as in, "I'd like to retaliate to that point." Is this new? Or a conservatism?

• "Debatle," for deal, as in, "I don't want to debatle it."

• "Converse," for converse, as in, "We conversed about it for a while." Why can't people just talk?

• "Arrive back," for return, as in, "They arrived back about the same time."

• "Prejudism," for prejudice, as in, "I confess I have a slight prejudism against people who butcher the language."

• "Deliberacy," for deliberation, as in, "Was deliberacy involved in this murder?"

The language is a living thing, it's true. It keeps changing, although whether it will ever change enough to accept all of the above usage remains to be seen. But it is full of surprises. For example, I've been grumbling about Olympic athletes "modalizing" (as opposed to "modaling")

Torval in various events. So, I was a little chagrined to learn that the noun "modal" has officially become a verb, according to the American Heritage Dictionary. I model You model. She models. English may be messy. I have to like all the new life forms.



Joe Salvati, left, has convinced reporter Dan Rea, right, of his innocence in a 1965 gangland murder. "We have a wonderful system of justice," says Rea, "but there are mistakes."

By Charles Kenney
GLOBE STAFF

Dan Rea's mission impossible

The WBZ reporter insists convicted murderer Joe Salvati is innocent, but some call his crusade a blind obsession

ON a night in November 1961, after finishing a story late on the 11 o'clock news, WBZ-TV reporter Dan Rea returned to his car in a parking garage and typed up a list of story ideas.

The fourth item on the list read: "Is anyone innocent? Let's find someone wrongly convicted somewhere in prison system... there must be someone wrongly convicted. Let's find them and surprise them!"

Now, more than two years after he wrote that memo to himself, Rea is fighting a journalistic crusade to win freedom for a man Rea is convinced has spent 28 years in prison for a crime he did not commit. During the past eight months, Rea has been a passionate advocate for Joe Salvati of the North End, who was convicted in 1967 of being an accessory to the gangland murder of hoodlum Teddy Dwyer.

Since May, Rea has broadcast 18 stories on the case, helped trigger a renewed investigation by the Suffolk County District Attorney's office, successfully urged station management to establish in support of Salvati (and went so far as to write the editorial himself), repeatedly encouraged numerous other reporters to team to get on the story. And in an unusual move for a news reporter, Rea even pressed officials in the administration of Gov. Weld and in the DA's office to help Salvati.

Out of this crusade — this obsession, as it is viewed by some — have emerged two sharply conflicting views of Rea and his work.

Salvati partisans hail him as a hero doggedly pursuing justice, "the public conscience on this case," according to Salvati's lawyer, Victor Gero, who says that without Rea's willingness to "stand up to the litigation and put his reputation

on the line we'd be nowhere."

But officials in the office of Suffolk DA Ralph C. Martin bitterly denounce Rea's crusade as egregiously one-sided reporting and a thinly veiled effort to pressure Martin into supporting Salvati's quest for freedom.

"He was an advocate for Salvati even while he was supposed to report the story," says Martin. "And even after the on the line we'd be nowhere."

Salvati argument lost on all objective grounds (Rea still wouldn't let go).

Dan Rea is the last reporter in Boston anyone would ever predict would crusade on behalf of a convicted murderer. The 45-year-old native of Hyde Park says he is anything but a "freebie-hunt journalist." He has a long history as an ardent conservative. He was national vice chairman of the right-wing Young Americans for Freedom, opposed Nixon at one point because he was too liberal and protested against George McGovern.

But Rea contends that the Salvati case goes to the heart of his ideology: "I think conservatives have a healthy suspicion of government," says Rea, who characterizes himself as a libertarian. "We have a wonderful system of justice, but there are mistakes, there are bad decisions."

Rea was introduced to the Salvati case by Ronald A. Case, dean of the Boston University Law School. Case, a BU Law graduate, had gone to Case for advice on the case after Salvati had been denied a commutation, and Case in turn had called Rea, another BU Law alum. Rea and Gero met in Case's office in March of last year, and Gero began the session by saying, "I am going to tell you the story of the greatest miscarriage of justice in the history of jurisprudence in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts."

Rea's immediate reaction was that Gero was nuts. But an hour or so later, Rea, Page 72

New Mexico beyond the postcards

By Christine Timm
GLOBE STAFF

A 10-foot-tall and very shiny statue of an American Indian warrior leaning over a weeping woman who is being restrained by a liberal volcano. That's the work that currently dominates the Main Gallery at the Massachusetts College of Art. It looks rather like a giant Jell-O mold, but it's actually made of Shergon and acrylic paint, the preferred media of its maker, Luis Zimmerman, son of a town sign maker in New Mexico.

Zimmerman is one of six artists in "Homeland Use and Desire," a superb show of New Mexican work organized for Mass Art by Juliana Branson and Michele Furet. You won't find Anselm Kiefer, or Georgia O'Keefe, but you will find the central goal was to get away from those stereotypes. What Branson and Furet did find, on research jaunts to Santa Fe and elsewhere, was a lot of real stuff — New Age art and tour-



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In This Corner

Potty-training times three

By Elmer Nelson
GLOBE TO THE GLOBE

I never that it would never happen. It went against every tenet of child-rearing that I held dear. But, yes, I became a downright nut case on the subject of toilet training.

I wasn't always this way. For the longest time I was positively mellow. I held onto my ardent belief that the experts were right in saying that "it would happen" when "the child was ready." I declined those who resorted to M&M bribes. My triplet boys and I would never get into a struggle about this. I learned myself.

But their third birthday came and I went, and things appeared in my armor. CORNER, Page 75