

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
AMERICAN DIALECT SOCIETY

# NADS 29.1

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*NADS* is sent in January, May and September to all ADS members. Send ADS dues (\$30 per year), queries and news to editor and executive secretary Allan Metcalf, English Department, MacMurray College, Jacksonville, Illinois 62650, phone (217) 479-7115 or (217) 243-3403, e-mail AAllan@aol.com.

*ADS Web site:* <http://humanities.byu.edu/humstudents/lillie/ads/index.htm>

*ADS-L discussion list:* To join, send to Listserv@uga.cc.uga.edu the message:  
Sub ADS-L Your Name

*From:*

AMERICAN DIALECT SOCIETY  
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**FIRST CLASS**

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## REGIONAL MEETINGS, FALL 1997

### Rocky Mountain Region

In association with RMMLA, Oct. 16–18; Denver, Executive Towers.

**March 15** is the deadline for abstracts (maximum 300 words) to **Mary E. Morzinski**, English Department, 356 Berry College, Mt. Berry, GA 30149, mmorzinski@berry.edu.

ADS Regional Secretary 1997–98: **Grant W. Smith**, English Dept., Eastern Washington Univ., Cheney WA 99004; e-mail gsmith@ewu.edu.

**Membership** in RMMLA is \$25 regular, \$15 student. Write RMMLA Executive Director Charles G. Davis, C-203, Boise State Univ., 1910 University Dr., Boise ID 83725; phone (208) 385-1199 or (800) 824-7017, ext. 1199; e-mail CDavis@quartz.idbsu.edu.

**Future meeting:** 1998 possibly Flagstaff, Arizona.

### South Central Region

In association with SCMLA, Oct. 30–Nov. 1; Dallas, Harvey Hotel Downtown.

**March 15** is the deadline for abstracts to the meeting chair, **Michael R. Dressman**, Dean, Coll. of Humanities and Social Sciences, Univ. of Houston-Downtown, One Main St., Houston TX 77002; phone (713) 221-8009.

ADS Regional Secretary 1996–97: **Charles B. Martin**, Dept. of English, Univ. of North Texas, P.O. Box 13827, Denton TX 76203-3827; phone (817) 565-2149.

**Membership** in SCMLA is \$20 full professors, \$15 associate and assistant professors, \$10 instructors and students. Write SCMLA, Katherine E. Kelly, Executive Director, Dept. of English, Texas A&M Univ., College Station TX 77843-4227; phone (409) 845-7041; e-mail scmla@acs.tamu.edu; <http://engserve.tamu.edu/files/scmla/>.

**Future meetings:** 1998 New Orleans; 1999 Memphis.

### Midwest Region

In association with MMLA, Nov. 6–8; Chicago, Ramada Congress Hotel.

**March 24** is the deadline for sending abstracts to the meeting chair, **W. Thomas Beckner**, English Dept., Taylor Univ., 1025 W. Rudisill Blvd., Fort Wayne IN 46807; tmbeckner@tayloru.edu.

ADS Regional Secretary 1997–98: **Beth Lee Simon**, CM 109, Dept. of English and Linguistics, IPFW, Fort Wayne, IN 46805; phone (219) 424-8834; e-mail simon@cvax.ipfw.indiana.edu.

**Nominating Committee:** Crawford Feagin, chair; Connie Eble, Peter Patrick.

**Membership** in MMLA is \$25 full and associate professors, \$20 other faculty, \$15 students. Write MMLA, 302 English/Philosophy Bldg., Univ. of Iowa, Iowa City IA 52242-1408; (319) 335-0331; mmla@uiowa.edu.

**Future meetings:** 1998 Nov. 5–7, Regal Riverfront Hotel; 1999 Nov. 4–6 Minneapolis, Marriott City Center.

### South Atlantic Region

In association with SAMLA, Nov. 8–10; Atlanta, Westin Peachtree Plaza.

**May 1** is the deadline for abstracts to the meeting chair, **Natalie Schilling-Estes**, Department of English, North Carolina State University, Raleigh NC 27695-8105; estes@unity.ncsu.edu.

ADS Regional Secretary 1997–98: **Michael Picone**, Dept. of Romance Languages and Classics, Univ. of Alabama, Box 870246, Tuscaloosa AL 35406-0246; mpicone@ualvm.ua.edu.

**Membership** in SAMLA is \$20 for individuals, \$10 for students. Write SAMLA, Georgia State Univ., University Plaza, Atlanta GA 30303-3083; phone (404) 651-2693; mhess@gsu.edu.

**Future meetings:** 1998 Nov. 12–14 Atlanta, Hyatt Regency; 1999 Nov. 11–13 Atlanta, Hyatt Regency.

# Annual Meeting 1998 • New York City, Jan. 8 – 10

## PRELIMINARY CALL FOR PAPERS

Next year ADS will again meet with the Linguistic Society of America, this time in New York City, Thursday through Saturday, January 8–10. We'll be housed in the completely remodeled Grand Hyatt Hotel near Grand Central. Rooms will be exactly \$89.99 (plus tax).

*Deadline for proposals:* August 15. You are encouraged to make a proposal even if you do not have a paper fully developed. With your proposal, please specify whether you want your paper considered for the special session (below) and whether you will need audio-visual equipment.

*Early decision:* If you would like early confirmation of your place on the program, please get your proposal to the Executive Secretary by *March 21*.

*Special session:* "Reconfiguring Regional Dialects in the 21st Century." Program Chair **Ronald Butters** explains: Papers are particularly welcome on 1) the (potentially) endangered dialect isolate, i.e., enclaves such as the North Carolina Outer Banks and (perhaps?) the Minnesota Iron Range; 2) the effects on regional dialects of transplant dialects in rapidly growing areas such as the North Carolina Research Triangle; 3) new ethnic dialects such as Vietnamese (reconfigured like Hispanic English, etc.); 4) shifts and meltings at major dialect boundaries; 5) the possible effect of the growing African-American middle class on AAVE.

### MLA Deadline: March 21

If you'll be attending the 1997 convention of the Modern Language Association in Toronto, Dec. 27–30, you are invited to propose a paper or an entire session to be sponsored by ADS. Send your proposal to Executive Secretary Allan Metcalf by March 21. We must adhere to this strict deadline because MLA is unbending on its. Those who are on the ADS program at MLA must be paid-up MLA members by April 1.

### Ebonics for NCTE

ADS will sponsor a session on "Ebonics and Education: Reconsidering the Issues" at the 1997 convention of the National Council of Teachers of English in Detroit, Nov. 21–23. Chair will be ADS President **Walt Wolfram**, North Carolina State Univ. Presentations:

1. The Inclusion of Exclusion in Diversity. **Jerrie Scott**, Univ. of Memphis.

2. AAVE in Education: The Dynamics of Pedagogy, Ideology, and Identity. **Sonja L. Lanehart**, Univ. of Georgia.

3. Ebonics, *King* and Oakland: Some Folk Don't Believe Fat Meat is Greasy. **Geneva Smitherman**, Michigan State Univ.

Membership and convention information are available from NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096; phone (217) 328-3870, fax (217) 328-0977.

### Three Students Honored

At the Annual Luncheon, President **Lawrence Davis** announced the award of Presidential Honorary Memberships 1997–2000 to **Trevor Porter**, Memorial Univ. of Newfoundland, nominated by William Kirwin; **Anne-Marie Hamilton**, Univ. of Georgia, nominated by William A. Kretzschmar, Jr.; and **Brenda M. Stelle**, Indiana Univ./Purdue Univ.-Fort Wayne, nominated by Beth Lee Simon.

The four-year complimentary memberships are intended to encourage interest and participation in our field by outstanding students, graduate or undergraduate.

Nominations are now invited for next year's three Presidential Honorary Memberships. All that is needed is a letter of recommendation, although supporting material is also welcome. Send nominations to President **Walt Wolfram** at Dept. of English, North Carolina State Univ., Box 8105, Raleigh NC 27695-8105, wolfram@social.chass.ncsu.edu.

## ADS Voters Choose 'Mom' as Word of the Year 1996

In the annual vote at our annual meeting, ADS members and friends on Jan. 3 chose as word of the year 1996: "mom" as in "soccer mom," the newly significant type of voter courted by both candidates during the presidential campaign. That term has spun off other designations such as "minivan mom" and "waitress mom."

"Mom" received 25 votes in the final show of hands, compared with 16 for the runner-up "alpha geek," the person in a workplace who knows most about computers.

Winners in particular categories were:

1. *Most Useful*: "dot" (18 votes) used instead of "period" in e-mail and URL addresses. Runner-up: "d'oh" (12) recognition of one's stupidity (from the Simpsons TV show).

2. *Most Unnecessary*: "Mexican hustle" (20) another name for the Macarena (which is not Mexican). Runner-ups: "bridge to the 21st century" (13) the putative work of presidential candidate Bill Clinton, and "uber-" (6) prefix akin to "super" as in "ubermom."

3. *Most Controversial*: "Ebonics" (unanimous) African-American vernacular English. Even among ADS members "Ebonics" was controversial, as we found ourselves disagreeing on the definition. Does "Ebonics" imply that it is a separate language?

4. *Most Likely to Succeed*: "drive-by" (25) designating brief visits or hospital stays as in "drive-by labor," "drive-by mastectomy," "drive-by viewing." Runner-up: "nail" (7) to accomplish perfectly, as an Olympic feat, election victory, or movie role.

5. *Most Outrageous*: "toy soldier" (22) land mine (in the former Yugoslavia). Runner-ups: "stalkerazzi" (4) photographers (paparazzi) who stalk their prey, and "roofie" (3) Rohypnol, the date-rape drug.

6. *Most Original*: "prebuttal" (18) preemptive rebuttal; quick response to a political adversary. Runner-up: "alpha geek" (14).

7. *Most Euphemistic*: tie (18 each) between "urban camping" living homeless in a city,

and "food insecure" said of a country where people are starving.

8. *Word of the Year*, first vote: "mom" 7, "alpha geek" 7, "drive-by" 7, "go there" to mention a topic 6, "dot" 5, "all that" 5, "Macarena" 2, "stalkerazzi" 2, "nail" 1, "prebuttal" 1, "una" as in Unabomber 1.

Second vote: "mom" 12, "alpha geek" 9, "drive-by" 7, "go there" 7, "dot" 4, "all that" 3.

Third vote: "mom" 17, "alpha geek" 10, "drive-by" 9, "go there" 6.

Final vote: "mom" 25, "alpha geek" 16.

A list of winners from all previous votes 1990-95 is at the ADS Web site (see cover).

What about 1997? Send nominations anytime to New Words Committee Chair **Wayne Glowka**, Dept. of English and Speech, Georgia College and State University, Milledgeville GA 31061; e-mail [wglowka@mail.gac.peachnet.edu](mailto:wglowka@mail.gac.peachnet.edu); or to **David Barnhart**, PO Box 247, Cold Spring NY 10516, e-mail [Barnhart@highlands.com](mailto:Barnhart@highlands.com).

## Dues to Rise for 1998

At its annual open meeting Jan. 3, the ADS Executive Council approved the Executive Secretary's recommendation to raise annual dues to \$35 (\$20 for students) starting with 1998. Life Membership, always 20 times annual dues, will be \$700.

The increase is based on an anticipated increase in issues of *PADS*, and on the rule of thumb that has worked for most of the Society's century of existence—namely, 100 times the cost of first-class U.S. postage (now rounded off to the nearest \$5). Dues were last raised (from \$25 to \$30) in 1994.

As usual, the future increase creates a present opportunity. In advance of the September billing for 1998, you may renew membership for as many future years as you wish at the current \$30 rate (\$15 for students). And through Dec. 31, you may become a Life Member for a mere \$600—and minus the current year's payment, at that.

## Philological Eccentrics

By Richard W. Bailey  
The University of Michigan

(Remarks at the ADS Annual Luncheon,  
Chicago, January 4, 1997)

"Present company excepted." That's the opening sentence I promised to those who suggested candidates for the honor of being recognized as "eccentric philologists" today, and I am especially grateful to Fred Cassidy who nominated W. E. Leonard and who has, I suspect, known more than his fair share of them.

Madness, as Michel Foucault instructs us, is a socially-constructed category, and, if we might dispute that notion, we can hardly doubt that *eccentric* and *philologist* are both categories that have much to do with our ideas of normal and abnormal behavior. Philology, I would argue, is itself an eccentric preoccupation—one that is "off center"—in the context of what most people do with their lives, and as we look backward we can see that it was even more obviously eccentric in the days when university teaching was not available to shroud eccentricity in the shade of academic groves.

Wandering through New York department stores inducing floorwalkers and salespeople to say "fourth floor" is, on the face of it, an eccentric activity in the service of philology, and that's of course what Bill Labov did in a pilot study for his dissertation that is one of the landmarks of our field. Arch Hill in his ice-cream suits recording the discussion following papers at the Linguistic Society was, by comparison, merely odd, and so were those wonderfully large hats worn by E. Adelaide Hahn at the same meetings.

Margaret Bryant arriving in Detroit from New York with a carload of citation slips only became eccentric when she discovered, from a helpful immigration officer, that she was not yet halfway to her destination: Northern Michigan University. (Such geographical innocence about the heartland of America, I

fear, was hardly eccentric among her fellow denizens of the Borough of Brooklyn.)

As we distance ourselves a little in time, eccentricity becomes more obvious. Take, for instance, Charles Kay Ogden (1889-1957). Ogden was a distinctly original thinker about language, probably best known for his invention, based on his collaborative book with I. A. Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923), of Basic English. Elusive and devious in his personal life, he had a large collection of masks. Here, in the reminiscence of Mary Adams, is how he used them.

He would often don a mask. He had many masks. A wonderful collection. And he would wear a mask while he talked to you—and often put a mask on you. Because, he said, "This enables me to talk in terms of ideas and not in terms of personalities. I blot you out. I only listen to what you say and the ideas that you have" (quoted by Gordon, 3).

Masks were inspired by the philological detail that *personality* is, etymologically speaking, connected to the English word *mask*. His moment of international fame came in 1943 when Winston Churchill accepted an honorary degree at Harvard and, in his remarks, endorsed Basic as an international auxiliary language. In due course, a parliamentary committee sketched ways in which it might be promulgated by the British Council and the B. B. C. In June 1946, Ogden agreed to assign the copyright for Basic to the government and accepted payment of £23,000—a sum selected because it was that amount that Jeremy Bentham received for transferring his model prison, the Panopticon, to public ownership. In this case, it is not entirely obvious which was the more eccentric: the seller or the purchaser.

Some philological eccentrics simply elude our best efforts to discover them. One such was certainly John Stephen Farmer (?1845-1915), the compiler of the magnificent dictionary, *Slang and Its Analogues* (1890-1904) and the editor of the fifty-seven volume *Tudor*

## Elusive Farmer, Immovable March

*Facsimile Texts* (1907-1913) among many other works of learning. Any lexicographer who could fill more than two densely set pages with synonyms and analogues for 'penis' must certainly qualify as eccentric in some way. Gershon Legman, who looked carefully into the matter, rejected the idea that Farmer was a pseudonym, basing his judgment on the case of Farmer v. Poulter and Sons in 1891.

Having printed the first volume of Farmer's magnificent opus, Poulter and Sons declined to print the second on the grounds that it was "grossly indecent, immoral, and obscene." Since he became acquainted with Poulter and Sons through their publication of the *Young Men's Christian Institute Magazine*, we can assume that Farmer was naive in selecting that printer to do the work. A shocked jury awarded a staggering sum of money to Poulter and Sons on their counterclaim: £114. Fortunately, Harrison, Queen Victoria's printer, carried on with the dictionary until it became too much for that firm too and printing was carried forward to completion in the Netherlands. But what of Farmer? Legman's assiduous search for evidence produced only two scraps of information: that he lived with a woman not his wife and that he was always broke.

A far-better documented life is that of Francis Andrew March (1825-1911), a founding member of the Dialect Society and an ornament to philology in the United States. While a student at Amherst College, he was influenced by Noah Webster, and later organized the North American readers for the *Oxford English Dictionary*. March was an enthusiastic spelling reformer and was president of the Spelling Reform Association from 1876 to 1905, but efforts to change the spelling of English words were not, in his day, signs of eccentricity.

Now March was certainly the most illustrious scholar to have ornamented the faculty of

Lafayette College, and his fame is such that an extract from his writing appears in the current issue of *PMLA*. In 1907, Lafayette College prepared to celebrate its seventy-fifth anniversary, and, as it approached, the Trustees thought it would be a good time for Professor March to retire. At the commencement of 1905, he would reach his eightieth birthday and complete fifty years as a member of the faculty. "The committee appointed to wait on him made no progress in their painful and delicate mission," writes the historian of the college (Skillman 2:164). Though offered his full salary and the use of his house, March refused to resign, even after the Trustees "went to one of Professor March's recitations in a body!"

Finally the Carnegie Foundation provided \$2,000 as a retirement salary—keep in mind that all of us who enjoy TIAA/CREF have that benefaction as our legacy. Still March continued to teach for "a year or two longer." After his death in 1911, "The Trustees resolved to erect on the campus a statue of the great scholar, and in addition to such material monument to 'make further endowment of the department of English and Philology.' Neither of these resolutions has been carried out as yet" (Skillman 2: 191), at least by 1932 when the history of Lafayette was published..

A pair of lives came into conjunction at the organizational meeting of the American Philological Society held at Vassar College in 1869: William Dwight Whitney (1827-1894) and Edward Howard Ruloff (1820-1871). Not least among their differences is that Whitney believed that language arises by convention—DeSaussure later credited Whitney for the idea of the *arbitrariness* of language—and Ruloff believed that it emerges through human creativity.

Whitney was not, I suppose, an eccentric, though he had some engaging quirks. Having been graduated from Williams College at age eighteen, Whitney worked for three or four

## Whitney in Swamps, Ruloff in Auburn Prison

years at a bank in his native Northampton, all the while learning languages. When his brother Josiah returned from studying in Germany, he brought books of all sorts including Franz Bopp's Sanskrit Grammar. In 1849, Josiah appointed his brother as "assistant sub-agent" to an expedition to explore the geology of the copper region of northern Michigan, and "among the swamps and mosquitoes" William Dwight Whitney read Bopp with fascination. Toward the end of the expedition, he lamented: "How often have I longed for that Sanskrit grammar which I so foolishly sent down before me to the Sault" (Lanman, 13).

In 1850, Whitney set out for Germany and spent three years studying Sanskrit. As the daughter of his landlady in Tübingen recalled many years later: "The only adornment which he had in the room was an American flag draped over the mirror; and on the Fourth of July he said he would work an hour less than usual, as it was the anniversary of American independence" (Lanman, 24).

It is Ruloff, however, who attracts our attention on this occasion, and the July 1869 meeting in Poughkeepsie was where his path crossed Whitney's. In May, Ruloff had presented himself in New York City under an alias, "Edward Leurio," and brought his ideas about language to the attention of "most, if not all[,] persons of linguistic attainments in this City [viz. New York] and vicinity" including those in New Haven (Comfort, 4.7). He declared that he had a "famous manuscript" titled "A Key to the Origin and Formation of Languages," and on July 1st offered to sell it for the breathtaking sum of \$500,000.

Duly enrolled as a member of the Philological Association, he requested that a committee be formed to examine the merits of his new system. "The report of the Committee was unfavorable, as might be expected. At this the mild and gentle Mr. Leurio disappeared. In his place appeared the violent,

abusive and profane Mr. Leurio. The last that was seen of him was upon the Albany day-boat as it approached the wharf in this City, where he was still cursing the Association and the Committee for having ruined him irretrievably" (Comfort). At the conclusion of the same meeting, Whitney was elected president of the American Philological Society.

Orphaned at age five, Ruloff completed high school but his uncle (with whom he was living) declined to provide him with further education. While working as a lawyer's clerk, he studied chemistry, botany, Greek, and Latin. "He remained two years there, devoting all his time to study, begrudging even the time it took him to eat his meals" (Gray and Vanderpool, 8.1). Determining at last to become a medical doctor, Ruloff encountered in Ithaca, New York, what he called "a difficulty," conviction of a capital crime, that sent him to Auburn Prison in 1846.

In response to questioning in 1871, he declared: "I occupied all my leisure in languages, more or less, and at that time I had been thinking about it day and night, because I believed I had the secret of success in philological studies." Derided as a crank, he was able to recite Homer and Sophocles from memory. According to R. H. Mather of Amherst College, "On one or two passages of HOMER in particular, he showed great acuteness of criticism, and a most thorough appreciation of the grandeur of the sentiment. One or two renderings of President [Cornelius Conway] Felton [of Harvard] he opposed most vigorously, and when I supported the common version he quoted from a vast range of classics to confirm his view" (Mather 1.3).

Leaving Auburn prison, Ruloff migrated south to Pennsylvania where he applied for a professorship at Jefferson College in Canonsburg. No position being available, he was hired to do clerical work, but faculty members soon "satisfied themselves of his remarkable scientific and literary attainments."

## Murder and Method, Culture and a Hanging

When a position was announced at Chapel Hill College in North Carolina, the Jefferson professors recommended him, but just at that time events from his past caught up with him. He had escaped from prison with the aid of Mrs. Jarvis, the wife of his jailer whom he had seduced while teaching languages to her son Albert, "then a prattling, innocent ruddy boy" (*New York Times*, 7 Jan 1871, 1.7). In a letter to Ruloff, Mrs. Jarvis demanded \$500 and Albert promised to murder him if he did not fork over the cash forthwith.

In his self-serving account of this startling turn of events, Ruloff said that "Gratitude and love both conspired in his breast to induce one earnest effort to secure the money and send it to the only woman he loved." Breaking into a jewelry store in a neighboring village, he made off with a bundle of stolen gems. As he walked along in the early morning, he was overtaken by a horse and wagon and persuaded the reluctant driver to give him a ride. Shortly thereafter, two men appeared, accused the driver of stealing the rig, and arrested him. Through the "good character" he received from the professors at Jefferson College, Ruloff convinced the officials that the horse-thief had also pillaged the jewelry store. The professorship at Chapel Hill, however, eluded him.

Ruloff came to public attention following a botched burglary at a store in Binghamton, New York. Interrupted by two clerks sleeping on the premises, Ruloff and two companions were attacked by them and the burglars responded by shooting one fatally before plunging into the Chenango River behind the store and attempting to swim to the other side.

Two of them drowned, including Albert Jarvis, whose preceptor in languages had become his mentor in crime; the third, Ruloff, was found "concealed in a remote out-house" (*New York Times*, 5 Jan. 1871, 8.1) belonging to Chauncey Livingston, who later sued to obtain the \$1,000 reward offered by the pro-

prietors of the store (*New York Times*, 18 June 1871, 6.4). After a sensational trial, Ruloff was convicted of murder and sentenced to be hanged.

In appealing to the governor for clemency, Ruloff raised several legal points of procedure and added a philological argument.

As to his discovery in language your petitioner begs leave respectfully to present as follows: He has for many years more or less engaged in philological research. His investigations have led to the discovery of a beautiful method in cultivated language. Till now this method has been in modern times entirely unknown. It so far transcends in elegance and in art all that has hitherto been regarded as possible in language, that to minds unprepared its principles are nearly incomprehensible, and the mere statement of them often causes your petitioner to be regarded as insane (Ruloff, 8.2).

Insane he certainly was considered, and Governor John T. Hoffman appointed doctors to examine him, a team led by Dr. John P. Gray of the Utica Insane Asylum. Concluding that he was "in sound physical health and entirely sane," the doctors' report provided an interesting first-hand account of Ruloff's philological "method."

As I mentioned earlier, Ruloff believed that language arises from culture rather than from an arbitrary connection between word and thing (as Whitney had declared in his Smithsonian lectures of March 1864). "Hardly arbitrary, because that would preclude choice. There was method in its formation," Ruloff asserted. And here is a specimen of that belief:

The phraseology of HOMER is worked up wonderfully and is greatly enriched from that of the early Greek writers. The letter "r" was not found in the earlier Greek. In writings up to that time the letter was not necessary, but when Bacchus came out of Melia, and bacchanalian life, with its orgies, revelry and carnivals began, it then became necessary to use hitherto unknown letters to properly designate the words necessary to describe the new conditions of life. (Gray and Vanderpool, 8.1)



## Leonard and the Locomotive-God

Two days before his execution, Ruloff hoped to continue his philological investigations: "if he could only live six weeks to finish his work, they might hang him and be d—d," he said (*New York Times* 18 May 1871, 5.4). At 5:00 AM of the day itself, he said "My time is getting short" and turned again to his dictionaries (*New York Times* 19 May 1871, 5.1). At 11:35 he was hanged.

Philology was one of the great subjects of nineteenth-century enthusiasm; craniometry, the measurement of skulls, was another. Ruloff's remains were buried in a cemetery plot owned by a Binghamton doctor; "the physician got possession of the head as a consideration for permitting the burial of the body in his lot" (*New York Times* 23 May 1871, 2.4).

My final example is far less gruesome and much more eccentric: William Ellery Channing Leonard (1876-1944). Leonard qualifies as a philologist not only by his deep knowledge of Greek and Latin but also by his translations into English verse of Empedocles, Lucretius, *Gilgamesh*, and *Beowulf*. He qualifies as eccentric, though his biographer describes him more clinically as "a legendary neurotic" (Yearsley, 206) and his autobiography, *The Locomotive-God* (1927), was read as "an important psychological document" in university courses.

Leonard's book is an account of the "diabolic resourcefulness of phobias" (280), and his demons had, among other consequences, the effect of limiting the range of his travel to an ever narrowing circle that, by the end of his life, had reduced itself to about a half mile radius around his apartment in Madison. In 1922-24, he wrote fifty pages describing a horrific two-hour period in September 1885 and speculated that it would take a thousand pages to do justice to it. In the end, *The Locomotive-God* swelled to more than four-hundred printed pages of anguished prose that fully merits a word I have for some time wanted to use: *perfervid*.

Fortunately for all involved, "the one place where [he] was to feel most self-confidence for the rest of [his] life was the class-room" (274), and one student of, I hope, many found his teaching "the birthplace of intellectual independence" (Yearsley, 206). On his own testimony, Leonard "used to get along, by a union of ironic detachment and ineradicable liking for blundering youth, even with freshmen engineers" (335).

Autobiography is built on the premise that the life of the author will be interesting to others, and Leonard had no compunction in believing that of himself, detailing his "autopschoanalysis" (5) and telling his readers more than they might prefer to know about such matters as his sex education. (For instance: "The fact is that for the animalistic sex-urges that constitute sex in the adolescent male there is no emollient and solvent equal to a friendly young schoolmate, even if her laughing bosom is rounded out like a woman's" [105].) Those university courses in psychology could, I suspect, devote quite a lot of time on the word *even* in that sentence.)

Tragedy, Aristotle says, should deal with events of a "certain magnitude," and so should autobiography. Leonard's *Locomotive-God* presumed that his "auto-psychoanalysis" met that requirement, an assumption perhaps to be expected from someone who wrote a Columbia Ph.D. dissertation on *Byron and Byronism in America* (1905). Two childhood traumatic events will serve to illustrate this principle.

In 1885, Leonard attended Washington School in Plainfield, New Jersey, for the first time at age eight, and was entrusted to the charge of an amiable teacher, Miss Bond. Two weeks later, in a fit of anxiety, he wet his pants and was observed by another pupil, Kathleen, who "points a stubby finger of disgust to a pool under my seat. Horror and shame. . . . That face will startle me with shudders from sleep in a distant city long

## Trauma by School and Steam

after Kathleen is dead" (58). He fled and, many pages later, arrived home breathless and sobbing.

Years later Leonard discovered the whereabouts of Miss Bond, who was by then pensioned and retired in a New Jersey village. In a letter to her, he wrote "at length" of the relation of the trauma in her classroom to his adult neuroses. The thirty-eight years intervening had, however, taken their toll on her memory, though she supplied him with minute details of the plan of the school (which seems, coincidentally, to have been constructed on the plan of Bentham's Panopticon). Her reply must have been in some ways a disappointment: "You can guess my reaction to your letter, no doubt, and what memories it recalled; but the incident to which you refer is not one of them" (74).

The other episode took place in 1878 when Leonard was only two years old; it was, he later discerned, the origin of his "neurotic handicap that prevents all travel" (119). Standing on the platform of the railroad station, a few steps separated from his mother and sister, Leonard saw the train bearing down on them with its awesome power and speed.

The locomotive sweeps by, and my physical paralysis ends in a sudden leap away. The steam discharges from under the piston-box into the child's anus, with Philological Eccentrics hot pain through his kilt-skirt. "God kills me *here too*," he thinks with a scream out loud, and presses his hand to the pain. I am to feel that pain a generation later . . . for ten years, it will wake me from sleep. (12-13)

That episode, and its consequences, push the edge of philological eccentricity to—or so I hope—its limit.

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## DSNA, Madison, May

(Continued from Page 16)

Wright's Taliesin in nearby Spring Green; the Wisconsin Dells; the village of New Glarus, called Little Switzerland; the Circus World Museum and the International Crane Foundation in Baraboo; Devil's Lake State Park; re-creations of ethnic farms and homesteads at Old World Wisconsin in Eagle; Pendarvis, a Cornish miners colony at Mineral Point.

Or stay in Madison and enjoy museums, gardens, State Street, and the shores of Lake Mendota (no visit to Madison is complete without a stop at the Union Terrace).

For more information write co-chairs **Joan Houston Hall** and **Luanne von Schneidmesser** at *DARE*, 6125 Helen White Hall, 600 N. Park St., Madison, WI 53706; e-mail [jdhall@facstaff.wisc.edu](mailto:jdhall@facstaff.wisc.edu), [lvonschn@facstaff.wisc.edu](mailto:lvonschn@facstaff.wisc.edu).

## Usage Committee Call for Articles: "Beyond Good English"

By James C. Stalker

Don't split infinitives. Don't end a sentence with a preposition. Don't use the first person pronoun in writing. Don't begin a sentence with "and" or "but." Plodding through—or being prodded through—English classes, from grade school through college, Americans learn a fear of English. The fear, really, is of bad English, the mistakes that will make us the object of ridicule or contempt. We want to do the right thing.

But we get a little miffed when people pick on our usage. *Who, whom*—what does it matter, if the meaning is clear? How can anyone learn all the rules? Who really uses that sort of language anyway? At the same time, though, we "know" that learning the rules of good English helps a person advance in society. And we "know" that maintaining our society depends upon maintaining standards.

What are we to do, then, with school systems that pass students along without their having learned good English? What are we to do about a society that seems to care less and less about the values of good English? What are we to do about Americans who are not interested in learning any English at all? What will happen to our civilization if we do not protect the standards of our language, the standards that promote civility and clarity?

Americans continue to care about these questions and their implications, even though as linguists we many think that they are issues which have already been resolved. *Beyond Good English* offers linguists' perspectives on issues of English usage that Americans care about.

Although linguists will clearly be interested in the collection, the primary audience for the book is educated readers who are interested in the language; hence the essays will be written in a style accessible to that audience and will be written to entertain as well as to educate.

The following list suggests possible sec-

tions of the book, but does not limit the scope of contributions.

—The creation of a standard: Historical explanations of the emergence of standard English in the U. S. and Britain; sociolinguistic perspectives on the role of usage in the maintenance of social power.

—Dialects and usage: Descriptions of regional dialect choices that become the focus of correctness rules, e. g., positive *anymore*.

—The persistence of non-standard usage: Descriptions of the persistence of some words as slang (or highly informal) for hundreds of years (e. g., *cram* 'to study hurriedly'); usage choices as discourse markers—politically, socially, and otherwise (e. g., the persistence of *ain't* in working-class language).

—Changing standards of good English: Descriptions of clear changes in preferred choices for specific usage items (e. g., *a couple (of) choices*); discussion of the social implications of those changes.

—Disputed standards of good English: Descriptions of current disputed usages (e.g., *minority* as a count or non-count noun, *their* as politically correct but grammatically incorrect generic singular pronoun, the replacement of *have* + p.p. with the simple past tense); discussion of the social implications of those disputes; exploration of written vs. oral standards.

—Social pressures on maintaining a standard: Reflections on the urge for national standards (e.g., English-only legislation; standards for school instruction in usage).

—Teaching the standard: Recommendations for how parents, schools, and governments might balance the tension between maintaining a standard and maintaining a diverse society.

Even if you only tentatively plan a contribution, please send your tentative title and a one- or two-sentence description as soon as possible to **James C. Stalker**, Dept. of English, Michigan State University, East Lansing MI 48824-1036; phone (517) 355-1781 or (517) 336-7118; fax (517) 353-3755; [stalker@pilot.msu.edu](mailto:stalker@pilot.msu.edu). Please include institutional affiliation, mailing address, telephone, fax, and e-mail address.

Fuller proposals of 2–5 pages should be submitted by April 1. Completed essays of 5–15 pages will be due Sept. 1.

## Semi-Natives, *Estar*, Style: ADS at ILA, March 8

Four papers will be presented in an ADS-sponsored session at the 42nd Annual Conference of the International Linguistic Association March 7–9 in the Intercultural Center, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.

“Language Change and Variation” is the theme of the entire conference. **William Labov** and **James McCawley** are the invited speakers. For information on registration and housing write the conference chair, Dr. Ruth Brend, 3363 Burbank Dr., Ann Arbor, MI 48105; phone (313) 665-2787; e-mail rbrend@umich.edu; fax (313) 665-9743.

The ADS session will be Saturday, March 8. Chair: **Silke Van Ness**, SUNY Albany.

1. “Syntactic Variation of Spoken Spanish in the United States: The Semi-Native Speaker.” **Elizabeth A. Martinez**, Coll. of Charleston.—To observe whether certain patterns of syntactic variation occur, two main divisions were created: the omission and misapplication/variation of elements within the sentence structure. The data were collected from high-school-aged Spanish speakers in various cities of the Southwest, Southeast and Northeast. The dominant language in the home for these informants is Spanish, but all of them have been educated in American schools from age 6. The information was obtained from narratives about personal experiences related to a set of six sociolinguistic drawings.

2. “The Semantic Development of the Spanish Copulative *estar*: Historical Antecedents and Perspectives on Present Use.” **Joseph R. Weyers**, Coll. of Charleston.—While philological studies indicate that the copulative verbs *ser* and *estar* were used rather interchangeably in Old Spanish (11th-17th centuries), with the definite *ser* predominating in most domains in which the transitory *estar* is used in modern Spanish, such studies stop short of chronologically tracing the semantic development and use of *estar*. The present study serves to fill in the gaps left by existing

linguistic histories. By analyzing one representative sample from each century, a chronology is established which indicates: the early (11th century) preference of *estar* for expressing location; the 13th century development of *estar* to express emotional states and conditions; the 14th century appearance of *estar* as the auxiliary verb of the progressive tenses; and the late development (15th-17th centuries) of *estar* with past participles to express the resulting condition of an action.

In current usage, particularly in modern Mexican and Mexican-American dialects, *estar* continues to encroach on domains which Standard Spanish dictates belong to *ser*.

3. “I-language, E-language, and the Sociolinguistics of Style.” **Dennis R. Preston**, Michigan State Univ.—Bell (1984) describes a theory of stylistic variation in which style both mirrors status and less powerfully influences variation than status itself does. Preston (1991) adds the corollary that status variation mirrors (and is less powerful than) variation due to linguistic factors (except in the case of stereotyped features). Finegan and Biber (1994) agree with Preston’s corollary but deny the relationship suggested by Bell, arguing that style (or ‘register’) is more powerful than status and that status variation is, in fact, simply the (less powerful) by-product of the fact that various social groups have ‘differential access’ to different registers in the social practice of a speech community.

Since Bell’s and Finegan & Biber’s analyses both stem from a review of a great deal of empirical work, the resolution of these competing views has been difficult. I propose that basic divisions of current linguistic theory (rather than competing notions of social embedding) lie at the root of this problem. In short, the work reviewed by Bell (and Preston) refers almost exclusively to work carried out within the quantitative or ‘Labovian’ paradigm of sociolinguistics. Cen-

## Personal Identity: ADS at ILA, Washington, March 8 (Cont.)

tral to that work is the notion of the 'sociolinguistic variable,' a feature which, in the vast majority of studies, can be characterized in terms of 'strict' (i.e., semantically equivalent) alternatives ('I saw those guys' versus 'I saw them guys' or 'I didn't do it' versus 'I ain't do it'). Although some of Finegan and Biber's studies make use of variables which would fit this definition (e.g., *that*-complementizer presence or absence) many others do not (e.g., frequency of pronoun use in different registers).

Although Finegan and Biber often confuse classical sociolinguistic variables with the variables of text linguistics, enough of their work is involved with text-linguistic elements to suggest that the empirical work they review and carry out does indeed suggest that registers, rather than status, are the principal factors in the sort of variation they study. On the other hand, Bell's work, focusing on classical quantitative sociolinguistics, finds variation (of the 'strict equivalence' sort) more deeply rooted in social differences. Oddly, Finegan and Biber's approval of Preston's generalization about the dominating influence of linguistic factors hides a basic difference, the key to this puzzle. Preston has I-language characterizations in mind, but Finegan and Biber have E-language ('language use') characteristics, typical of a functionalist approach, in mind as the basis for the powerful influence of 'linguistic factors' in their interpretation of stylistic variation.

4. "Phonological Systems and the Construction of Personal Identity." Rika Ito and Dennis R. Preston, Michigan State Univ.—Since Labov's pioneering work on Martha's Vineyard (1963), numbers of studies have shown the relationship between the selection of linguistic variants available in the speech community and the construction of individual social identity. Most of these studies, however, have focused on an individual's choice among features which would support one or

another of what one might call 'local identities.' Eckert's pioneering work in the Detroit suburbs, for example, shows how choices of different directions for the lowering and/or backing of the mid-front lax vowel as a part of the Northern Cities Chain Shift is an important indicator of an adolescent's identity with the 'jock' (school-oriented) or 'burnout' (street-oriented) elements of his or her surrounding society.

More recently, work in Michigan has focused on the acquisition of features of the Northern Cities Chain Shift among groups which are less likely to participate in the change, particularly non-European-American and non-urban groups. In this presentation we show that several individuals' positions in the Northern Cities Chain Shift (derived from interview, word-list, and reading passage data) and their 'loyalty' to the local, rural or small-town culture (derived from sociolinguistic interview discursal data) are strongly correlated. In particular, two young women from northern lower Michigan who do not differ in demographic characteristics (including opportunities to be exposed to the chain shift) are widely separated in their participation in it. The local loyalties of the young woman who participates least in the shift, however, are strong; the opposite is true of the other.

## Tamony Talk on Scotch-Irish

*(Continued from Page 16)*

and South distinct was contributed by them."

This is the 12th annual lecture commemorating the gift to the Western Historical Manuscript Collection of the voluminous clippings of slang and colloquialisms collected by Peter Tamony of San Francisco (1902–1985).

For further information, contact Nancy Lankford or Randy Roberts at Western Historical Manuscript Collection, 23 Ellis Library, Univ. of Missouri, Columbia MO 65201; phone (573) 882-6028; e-mail robertsr@ext.missouri.edu.

## 19th Century, Second Language, Quantity, Names, Quotations

If you have recently published a book, send pertinent information to Executive Secretary Allan Metcalf (address on cover), and we'll mention it here.

**Richard W. Bailey.** *Nineteenth-Century English.* Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1997. 372 pages, with 36 amazing illustrations. Cloth \$49.50. ISBN 0-472-10750-X.—Encompasses “the remarkable evolution of nineteenth-century English” around the world in chapters on writing, sounds, words, slang, grammar, and an astonishing variety of “voices,” on the premise that “English is a single language full of variety, and I believe that no speaker is beneath notice and no single one has exclusive rights to represent ‘the language.’”

**Robert Bayley and Dennis R. Preston,** eds. *Second Language Acquisition and Linguistic Variation.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1996. 317 pages. Cloth \$79. ISBN 1-55619-554-3.—Ten articles by authors familiar with up-to-date characterizations of the linguistic levels they study, with innovative methods of eliciting learner representations, and with mathematical techniques required for handling such data. A bonus is a comprehensive VARBRUL ‘how to’ for both DOS and Macintosh users. Additionally, this volume offers explanatory as well as descriptive accounts of data.

**Tom Dalzell.** *Flappers 2 Rappers: American Youth Slang.* Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1996. 256 pages, many full-color drawings. Paperback \$14.95. ISBN 0-87779-612-2.—Ten chapters with short essays and numerous word lists from 1850s college slang to the “Cowabunga!” 1990s, fully indexed.

**Paul Dickson.** *What's in a Name? Reflections of an Irrepressible Name Collector.* Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1996. 269 pages, with humorous drawings. Paperback \$14.95. ISBN 0-87779-613-0.—Contains 32 chapters of lists, explanations, and stories, arranged by subject (such as animal names)

and type (eponyms). No index to the thousands of names discussed.

**Stewart E. Kingsbury, Mildred E. Kingsbury, and Wolfgang Mieder.** *Weather Wisdom: Proverbs, Superstitions, and Signs.* 478 pages. New York: Peter Lang, 1996. Hardcover \$49.95. ISBN 0-8204-3326-8.—With 4,435 texts from the English-speaking world and an “index of indications” to locate weather wisdom on any topic.

**William A. Kretschmar, Jr., and Edgar W. Schneider.** *Introduction to Quantitative Analysis of Linguistic Survey Data: An Atlas by the Numbers.* (Empirical Linguistics) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996. 212 pages. Hardcover \$49.95, paper \$21.95.—Serious quantification and application of statistics demand the ability to handle large amounts of data with the efficiency of automation. This book provides a detailed account of how the Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States was reconceived and adapted to the needs of computerization, the mechanics of computerization of LAMSAS, analysis of data within the LAMSAS system, and statistical testing. The example of LAMSAS can be applied to other questionnaire surveys, large and small.

**Lesley Milroy and Pieter Muysken,** eds. *One Speaker, Two Languages: Cross-disciplinary Perspectives on Code-Switching.* Cambridge Univ. Press, Dec. 1995. 365 pages. Hardback \$59.95, ISBN 0-521-47350-0. Paperback \$24.95, ISBN 0-521-47912-6.—14 articles on code-switching in institutional and community settings, code-switching and social life, grammatical constraints on code-switching, and code-switching in bilingual development and processing.

**Margaret Miner and Hugh Rawson.** *American Heritage Dictionary of American Quotations.* New York: Penguin Reference, 1997. 656 pages. Hardcover \$29.95. ISBN 0-670-10002-1.—More than 5000 quotes on over 500 topics, indexed by author and keyword.

## DARE's Pauls and Paulas Plead: Please Pass the P's

Now that Volume III, I-O, is hot off the press, we're on the trail of P-S words. If you can help with any of the following "P" words, contact **Joan H. Hall** at DARE, 6125 Helen White Hall, 600 N. Park St., Madison WI 53706, or at [jdhall@facstaff.wisc.edu](mailto:jdhall@facstaff.wisc.edu).

**pat-a-cat** or **pattercat**—Two Georgia Informants gave these responses, one for a game similar to dodge ball, the other for a bat-and-ball game. Does anyone else know the names? For what kind of game?

**Paul Jones**—A dance that involves frequent changing of partners, or a method of changing partners in such a dance. Is this still known?

**Paul** (or **Paula**) **Pry**—A "meddlesome Mattie." The term comes from the 1825 comedy *Paul Pry*, by John Poole. We have it from 1950 in WI and 1968 in CN, but wonder whether it's still in use now.

**piccadilly**—A man's pointed-toe shoe. We have three examples, from IA and WI. Is it known elsewhere?

**piece**—To agree, get on well, prosper, as in "Do your children piece today?" This example is from 1931 *American Speech*, in swPA. The *OED* says that *piece* meaning 'to come to an agreement' is obsolete. Can anyone show otherwise?

**pig**—A segment of an orange or tangerine. The dictionaries show this to be a British term. We have a single citation from Rhode Island. Has it been adopted elsewhere?

**pig squealer**—A tulip tree. Does anyone know this term? Can anyone explain it?

**pillar poplar**—Still another name for the tulip tree. Why should it be so called?

**pillow pigeon**—A bedbug! We hope you don't know the critter, but have you heard the name?

**pinawinda**—The chinaberry tree. Another name for the tree is *pride of India*. Could this just be a transmogrification of that?

**pinback**—Another name for the horn shark, heard in sCA. More examples, please. And is *pin* a noun or a verb?

**pig's ear**—A place where liquor is sold illegally (a variant of *pig's eye*). We have examples only from Oregon and New York. Is the term known elsewhere?

**podunk**—A 1916 quote says "I spent the afternoon at Bob's podunk," where podunk means house/home/"pad." Does anyone know the term in this sense? (Please don't tell us about Podunk as the out-of-the-way or backwoods community!)

**point**—In a 1988 book reminiscing about life on Cape Cod in about 1915, an author writes: "If we were lucky enough to catch gudgeons (minnows) or small frogs, we sometimes 'pointed' the hook with them." Is this a standard fishing term?

**poison bird**—The man o' war bird. This may be a Mexican fisherman's word, translated to English. Can anyone testify to the use of *poison bird* in English?

## Cassidy Recuperates

ADS members who do not subscribe to ADS-L may not have heard that Chief Editor **Fred Cassidy** is in a rehabilitation center, recuperating from an unfortunate encounter with a moving vehicle. The night before Thanksgiving, he was hit by a car as he walked across a street during a snowstorm. His lower right leg was broken in four places.

Following extensive surgery and intensive physical therapy, he is doing well. Characteristically, he has decided to use his "down" time constructively, and is writing two book reviews he hadn't had time for before! Like Green Bay Packer wide receiver Antonio Freeman, he is using ultrasound therapy to speed the healing, and says he will be back in action soon.

Until the end of February, he can be reached at Middleton Village, Room 115, 6201 Elmwood Ave., Middleton WI 53602.

## Madison in May with DSNA

Planning is well under way for the 11th biennial meeting of the Dictionary Society of North America, to be hosted by our friends at the *Dictionary of American Regional English*. They have ordered fair skies, warm breezes, tasty foods, stimulating papers, and congenial participants. They can count on the last three, and Madison usually proffers the first two at the end of May.

The conference is scheduled for Thursday through Saturday, May 29–31, with participants arriving on Wednesday, May 28. The program includes a reception in the Rare Books Room of Memorial Library, where an exhibit of early dictionaries will be on display; a “traditional Wisconsin picnic”; a visit to DARE offices, and a public forum on DARE following the scheduled papers.

As usual, ADS has designated DSNA as our own Summer Meeting. The cast of congenial characters is remarkably similar.

Housing prices range from just \$48/54 (single/double) at the University's conference center and a nearby motel to \$79 for a lakeview room or \$129 for a lakefront room at The Edgewater, one of Madison's best hotels.

Those who can come early or stay late will find plenty of places to visit: Frank Lloyd  
(Please turn to Page 10)

## Scotch-Irish for Tamony XII

Michael Montgomery of the University of South Carolina will present the Peter Tamony Memorial Lecture on American Language at 3:45 p.m. Thursday, April 24, in Ellis Library Auditorium at the University of Missouri, Columbia. A public reception will follow at the Western Historical Manuscript Collection offices across the hall.

Montgomery's title is “The Many Faces of the ‘Scotch-Irish’: Who Were They and Why Does It Matter?” This presentation, Montgomery says, “seeks to identify the contributions to American language and culture of this 19th century stream of immigrants from Ulster. Few early groups of European immigrants were so large or became so invisible so quickly. Few have been characterized by later historians in such radically different ways, from the mythic ‘Winners of the West’ to the progenitors of modern-day hillbillies, rednecks, and crackers.

“Language patterns present a unique body of material to investigate what has been inherited from them. Linguists have been able to move beyond the multiple, often contradictory representations of the ‘Scotch-Irish,’ and have thereby discovered that much that makes the language of the American Midland  
(Please turn to Page 13)

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