ROCKET SURGERY
Even More Published Bloopers and Oddities With Puckish Retorts

DON HAUPTMAN
New York, New York
donhauptman@nyc.rr.com

As I continue work on a book of funny errors, I encounter no shortage of material. Whether online or in print, one readily finds such confusions—often with amusing consequences—as tenant for tenet, diffuse for defuse, pour for pore, louthe for loath, marital for marital, pubic for public, Calvary for cavalry. But nothing quite equals the distinctive website address inexplicably chosen by a shrink named Richard S. Horowitz: richardtherapist.com. Your bloopers are welcomed. Now, here is a new collection of risible specimens.

contactmusic.com, posted May 26, 2006:

Rocker David Lee Roth is determined to bring Van Halen back together. . . . “I see it absolutely as an inevitability. . . . To me, it’s not rocket surgery. It’s very simple to put together.”

And not brain science either.

The New York Times, February 26, 2008:

The body of a 52-year-old man, his mouth covered by duct tape, was found in a hotel bathtub in Brooklyn on Monday afternoon. . . . The police said they were investigating the death as suspicious.

Ya think??

Playboy, March 2008:

The more fundamental issue [is] whether pot qualifies as a medicine in the first place. Marijuana advocates assert the issue is cut-and-dried. . . .

Step 1: Cut. Step 2: Dry.

cbsnews.com, via Associated Press, August 22, 2005:

Former prisoner of war Jessica Lynch started college today at West Virginia University. . . . As Lynch had hoped, she went largely unnoticed. Publicist Aly Goodwin Gregg says Lynch has been out of the news for so long that she’s not quite as recognizable.

“Tell me again: I need a publicist because. . . .”

beliefnet.com, posting found November 2006:

Many victims suffer from ongoing emotional scars, and some have committed suicide or otherwise struggled to live normal adult lives.

Uh, is that what’s meant by “the new normal”?
Folio:, a magazine for the magazine industry, February 2008:

If we all packed up the asterisk, the bracket, the carrot and put [them] in a time machine, we'd be better off.

“Eh, what's up, Doc?”

imdb.com (Internet Movie Database), posting found February 2008:

Biography for Richard Basehart. . . . Basehart’s last work as an actor was doing the voice-over for the closing ceremonies of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. The day after finishing the recording he suffered the first of a series of fatal strokes.

But it's usually the last fatal one that gets you!

The New York Times, September 9, 2007:

Over the last six years, hundreds of teenage boys have been expelled or felt compelled to leave the polygamous settlement that straddles Colorado City, Ariz, and Hildale, Utah. . . . “A lot of guys go off the deep end,” Mr. Gilbert said. “For me, it meant a ton of alcohol and partying.”

So, is that the shallow end?

Newsletter of PAW-PAC, “California’s political action committee for animals,” status of recent bills, circa May 2006:


Wow, it really did change everything!


Q. When talking about laptops, what exactly does it mean when one is described as having “a 17-inch diagonal widescreen display”? Is it a rectangular display with a 17-inch length?

A. Perhaps you should find a hobby that’s less intellectually taxing.

Village Voice, film review, November 14, 2007:

[Charles Nelson] Reilly presents a witty anecdotal timeline of his life. . . . There are the stories of his racist mom, lobotomized aunt, and a TV exec who told him he’d never find work as a homosexual. . . .

Try Craigslist.

For their contributions, my thanks to these eagle-eyed blooper snoopers: For “Van Halen”: Richard Lederer, San Diego, Ca. For “suicide”: Yuri Prizel, NYC. For “Basehart”: Fred Cookingham, Woodside, N.Y. For “hunting”: Kecia Talbot, San Rafael, Ca.