FLACK JACKETS AND INCREASED SALVATION
Still More Published Gaffes and Oddities With Barbed Retorts

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For a book in progress, I continue to compile entertaining published anomalies and errors, appending to each a waggish response—a format popularized by The New Yorker. Contributions are invited; please send candidates to the above e-mail address.

wcbstv.com (CBS/AP dispatch), March 22, 2007:

Celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck is cooking up kinder, gentler menus. . . . His 14 fine-dining restaurants, more than 80 fast-casual eateries and 43 catering venues will use only eggs from hens that have lived cage-free. . . .

Asked for comment, several chickens enthusiastically replied: “Puck, Puck, Puck!”

The Wall Street Journal, editorial, May 2, 2007:

No deal is better than one that ignores labor realities.

Agreed. Uh, wait a minute. . . .

The Hill (a Washington newspaper), May 25, 2007:

“Senator McCain required a flack jacket, 10 armored Humvees, two Apache attack helicopters, and 100 soldiers with rifles by his side to stroll through a market in Baghdad just a few weeks ago,” Obama said in a statement. McCain responded immediately. . . . “By the way, Senator Obama, it’s a ‘flak’ jacket, not a ‘flack’ jacket,” McCain said.

Maybe he was protecting himself from aggressive publicists.

webmd.aol.com, consumer health article, undated:

While anything that makes you salivate will improve your breath, a gum that is sweetened with xylitol is your best option. Xylitol is a sugar substitute that not only increases salvation but also. . . .

Hallelujah!
The New York Times, Corrections, July 5, 2007:

An article last week about inexpensive dresses misstated the name of a clothing store on Broadway. It is Yellow Rat Bastard, not Dirty Yellow Bastard.

Our apologies if the proprietors took offense.

National Public Radio, All Things Considered, January 19, 2007:

Officials at Chimp Haven, a sanctuary for retired research chimpanzees in Keithville, La., have a mystery on their hands. One of their chimps, 40-year-old Teresa, recently gave birth to a daughter, Tracy. That came as a surprise because the staff thought all of the male chimps had undergone vasectomies.

It seems that the operation didn’t make a vas deferens.

The New York Times, Corrections, January 15, 2007:

An article in Business Day on Dec. 23 about the costs to acquire the gifts listed in the carol “The 12 Days of Christmas” misstated the gift for the 12th day. They are drummers drumming—not the lords, who leap on the 10th day.

Let’s see if we can reschedule . . .

The New York Times, Business section, August 7, 2006:

There have been some well-publicized errors—some intentional, some not—published on Wikipedia . . . (The “wiki” name is derived from a Hawaiian term meaning quick or fast, according to the site.)

Say, is that definition accurate?


Some [test subjects] consumed 10,000 calories a day, an amount so incredible that it would be hard to believe . . .

This is just incredulous.

The Wall Street Journal, Letter to Editor, November 29, 2006:

Language will evolve in whatever way people believe best enables them to communicate . . . Language will remain uniform and unchanging only as long as it serves the purpose of understanding one other.

Too late!

For the “salvation” item, thanks and a tip o’ the hat to Eric Hirsch, New York City.