

## PERSONAL ENCOUNTER

ANIL

Perth, Australia

I can only ‘second’ the much deserved praise and appreciation expressed elsewhere in this special issue to Ross and Faith for their unique, brilliant and indefatigable contribution to recreational linguistics. As well, probably unknown to most readers, they have personally subsidised the mag for years and refused to raise the price adequately to cover costs. (I hope I don’t embarrass them by revealing this. I think it’s wonderful. But I do willingly pave the way for any price rise the new management might choose to introduce. Nor would I expect any readers to balk if they did.)

All I can think of to add is of an interesting personal encounter. I and my cousin Judith Bridges, also a WW subscriber, were privileged to visit the Ecklers at their Morristown home in May of 2005. We found both of them hardy, hale and delightful people. (Unlike—I gather—that other great icon of logology, Dmitri Borgmann.) As well as enjoying their conversation on subjects logological, Word Waysian, bibliographic, etc., I was amazed at how simple and lean the “WW Publishing House” operation was, as befits Ross’ mathematical austerity. A highly memorable aspect of the visit for both of us had to do not with words or publishing but with the incredible doll house in the editorial room. It’s a detailed scale replica of his family home in upstate New York, over four feet long, two-storied and fully fitted out with the correct, functional lighting and with scale copies of the original furniture. It looked ready for immediate occupancy by any ETs of tiny stature who happen to visit their neck of the planet. (But they’d better bring interesting dictionaries!)

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## WORDS AT WORK

Have you ever wanted to go onto a stage, into an airline cockpit or a restaurant kitchen to listen to those professionals talk to each other? What does their jargon really mean? Mim Harrison’s slim paperback with the above title, published for \$16.95 by Walker & Company (Jan 2007), gives you a glimpse of fifteen professions at work, from magician to symphony conductor, from venture capitalist to cookie maker. If you want to impress your garbage man, talk of single stream recycling, paper mixed with bottles and cans. Pharmacists call broad-spectrum antibiotics gorillacin. Pooch traffic consists of slave-to-fashion customers (sales clerks watch for big-diamond earrings characterizing customers with both attitude and money). And it isn’t perfume but dummy juice that fills the big store display bottles.

Word Ways readers have been occasionally treated to this sort of jargon. In Feb 1990, Sarah Hautzinger described the language of carnival workers, and in Aug 1990 Dave Morice interpreted the jargon of restaurant waitresses talking to cooks.

A. Ross Eckler