LOOSE CANONS
Media Mistakes and Curiosities Provoke Wry Ripostes

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Below, more amusing errors and oddities followed by arch responses, assembled for a book in progress. Contributions of blooper sightings, to the above address, are welcome.

The New York Times, September 3, 2009:
“A whopping 97 percent of New York’s elementary and middle schools [earned] an A or B on the city’s annual report card. Yet [Schools] Chancellor Joel I. Klein was tempered in his praise. . . . ‘If you’re asking whether I would rather see less A’s, the answer is no.’”

Joel, stay after school and write 100 times on the blackboard: “fewer A’s.”

The Wall Street Journal, September 8, 2009:
“For many parents, Facebook and MySpace are helpful. . . . Just ask Cherie Miller [who] stays in touch via social-networking sites [including] her 21-year-old son’s page. . . . Her son couldn’t be reached for comment.”

Well, so much for that idea.

Village Voice, letter to editor, June 24, 2009:
“But none of these other artists created as rich a mixture of love story and hilarious comedy that we find in Annie Hal. . . .”

Wasn’t that Woody’s sequel to 2001: A Space Odyssey?

The New York Times, book review, pull quote, June 10, 2009:
“How to make your own gunpowder and a canon to match.”

Still, violence won’t help you break into the literary establishment.
"European residents who are least likely to trust official statistics."

"Zut alors! Zis facts eez chust not true!"

"A chart in some editions reversed instructions . . . for folding paper bills to help the blind identify them. The $5 bill should be folded widthwise and the $10 bill lengthwise, not vice versa."

"Uh, yeah, sure it’s a ten. Can’t you tell?"

"A secretive religious group . . . fought a long legal battle for the right to drink hallucinogenic tea in pursuit of spiritual growth. . . . [The sacramental brew] is quite bitter and often induces intense vomiting and diarrhea."

"My children, the path to enlightenment is indeed arduous."

"In her youth, when she was known as Baby Jane Holzer, she was a model, actress, and protégée of Andy Warhol. Today, she is an art collector and real estate developer with a penchant for buying and renovating luxury town houses."

"Kitschy coup!"

"This is the kind of development that has been driving the government cyber initiative,‘ said Scott Borg, director of the U.S. Cyber Consequences Unit, a think tank that advises government and companies."

"So do they call you. . . ?"

"Contaminated fresh eggs sickened thousands of people. . . . On Tuesday, the Obama Administration released a rule to deal with the nation’s egg problem. . . . ‘We are re-laying the foundation for our food safety system,’ said Scott Faber, vice president of the Grocery Manufacturers Association."

"Cluck!"