Recently, at a neighborhood French bistro, I spotted on the menu a side dish identified as “pommel frites.” A *pommel* is the knoblike protuberance on a saddle, or part of a sword. Not quite as tasty!

Typos on menus have long been convenient targets for ridicule. Another French term, *prix fixe*, is often rendered as *prefix*—or numerous other creative misspellings.

Now there’s another domain for amusing bloopers: dictation on mobile devices. Speech-recognition technology has improved considerably since the earliest systems, when users had to spend hours “teaching” the software to recognize their voices. Still, as with AutoCorrect, interesting transcription errors abound. I usually neglect to jot them down, but here are a few that I experienced and noted: *Audubon* became “autobahn.” *Barbuti*, “bar booty.” *Mill and Locke*, “Mel landlocked.” *Operetta*, “a Beretta.” And *prima donna*, “pre-Madonna.” Got any of your own risible examples?

As in my 17 previous *Word Ways* roundups of funny errors, the media provide the most fertile territory for sightings by dedicated blooper snoopers, who are always armed with snappy comebacks. Consider the following. . . .

*The Wall Street Journal*, April 17, 2020:

> “They’ve been thrust in the stoplight at a level of scrutiny that’s typically applied to the biggest tech companies in the world,’ Mr. Stamos said.”

▶ **Well, the worst that can happen is a traffic ticket.**

*The West Side Spirit*, N.Y.C. community weekly, June 11-17, 2020:

> “We see true need, poverty and desperation every single day right in front of our eyes and yet most have just become immured and do nothing or very little.”

▶ **So we’re emotionally walled off?**

*Bullseye*, National Public Radio, July 22, 2018:

> “She walked in to use the restroom and spilled her guts to the bartender.”

▶ **Ma’am, it’s in back on the right.**
New York Post, March 3, 2020:

“But SJP Chairman Steve Pozycki had called Perry’s decision ‘a dangerous precedent’ . . . Many real estate lawyers greed, arguing that revoking permits retroactively would . . .”

▶ As if the industry doesn’t get enough criticism on that front.

The Wall Street Journal, December 29-30, 2018:

“Well again, maybe somebody at AT&T is reckoning with the question of whether it really makes sense to try to replicate Netflix’s business model. . . . How many steaming services will consumers really support?”

▶ Have no fears. As usual, the executives will work everything out in the sauna.

Sometimes, typos and other mistakes are subsequently caught and corrected. I found the following three specimens in the Corrections column of The New York Times. As always, the retorts are my own.

December 3, 2019:

“An article on Thursday about Frank Sheeran, whose life inspired ‘The Irishman,’ misstated the given name of an organized crime figure killed in a shooting in 1972. He is Joseph (Crazy Joe) Gallo, not Vincent (Crazy Joe) Gallo.”

▶ We take no responsibility, however, for the moniker.

May 30, 2020:


▶ Doesn’t matter to the vampires.

September 17, 2019:

“An Op-Ed article on Saturday about performance-enhancing drugs and technology referred incorrectly to the classification of ostriches. They are birds, not mammals.”

▶ Did the editors have their heads in the sand?

Credits: For spotting the “greed” typo, thanks to Iris Bell. N.Y.C. Article title: I thought I had invented it, but a Google search proved that at least 16 clever people had anticipated me.