THE YEAR IN BLOOPERS
A Roundup of Funny Media Mistakes and Impish Retorts

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

Once again, it was a banner year for blunders and boners, flubs and fluffs, gaffes and goofs, slips and solecisms. Most such lapses are simply depressing, because they confirm America’s diminishing literacy levels. But some at least possess the redeeming value of amusement.

Among the more routine errors I spotted, in some cases followed a few days later by published corrections: big brother for baby brother, meteorological for metallurgical, motor for mortar, Posey Parker for Parker Posey, and suspension for suspicion.

Also in 2014: A newspaper’s editors apologized profusely for writing “a sorry store” when they meant “a sari store.” I attended a seminar where a speaker’s PowerPoint slide heralded the delicious territory of “American Samosa.” And in the persistent and ironic category of mistakes by educators, who should know better, a college professor referred to “people who did poor at high school.”

And now, the annual howler, faux pas, and anomaly awards:

Corrections & Amplifications, The Wall Street Journal, November 29-30, 2014:

“A balaclava is a ski mask. A Personal Journal article on Tuesday about winter workout gear incorrectly referred to bakhvava.”

▶ It doesn’t work as well.

Reuters, February 27, 2014:

“The world loses or wastes a staggering 25 percent to 33 percent of the food it produces . . . . Most losses take place at the consumption, production and handling and storage stages of the food chain, but regional breakdowns show noted differences.”

▶ Um, tell us about all the other stages.

The New York Times, November 24, 2014:

“If size matters, Dragon Age: Inquisition is the most ambitious story-based game of 2014 . . . . The appeal of Dragon: Age Inquisition . . . is not that you’re being told a story, but that you’re participating in one.”

▶ When meeting a lady dragon, never ask how old she is.
Corrections & Amplifications, The Wall Street Journal, September 10, 2014:

"Maggie Smith chose to take a role in ‘My Old Lady’ because she didn’t have to die in the film. A Heard & Scene article on Tuesday incorrectly said she chose it because she didn’t have to diet for the movie."

▷ A fate even worse than death.

thefutoncritic.com, a website covering primetime TV, August 7, 2014:

"In this latest installment of E!’s investigative series ‘Society X,’ Laura Ling explores the growing phenomenon of people living and looking like plastic dolls. . . . Blondie Bennett underwent multiple invasive and often risky plastic surgeries to achieve the perfect ‘doll’ look. Blondie is taking her transformation to an even more bizarre extreme by using hypnosis to become mentally vacant, just like a doll."

▷ Cancel the appointment.

The Wall Street Journal, June 18, 2014:

Review of healthful snack-sampler packages available via mail: “Monthly boxes of snacks that are vegan-free, gluten-free as well as soy-, wheat- and corn-free.”

▷ A carnivore’s delight.

The New York Times, August 28, 2014:

"Sometime around 2002 Ms. Dean began dating David Selig, a restaurateur who owned the Rice chain in New York and, now, Rockaway Taco in Queens. The two moved to Red Hook, Brooklyn, put a chicken coup in their backyard. . . ."

▷ This revolt was probably fomented by PETA.

The Wall Street Journal, August 6, 2014:

"The first step to finding your presence is self-assessment, experts say. Make a list of your strengths and weakness."

▷ Now that’s thinking positively!

For spotting the Dragon Age and vegan-free items, thanks to Iris Bell, New York, N.Y.