**Miscellaneous Ambiguity**

R. D. Jones And His Sewing Machine

The following is an ad from a real-life newspaper which appeared four days in a row - the last three hopelessly trying to correct the first day's mistake.

MONDAY:

For sale: R. D. Jones has one sewing machine for sale. Phone 948-0707 after 7 P.M.. and ask for Mrs. Kelly who lives with him cheap.

TUESDAY:

Notice: We regret having erred In R. D. Jones' ad yesterday. It should have read "One sewing machine for sale cheap. Phone 948-0707 and ask for Mrs. Kelly, who lives with him after 7 P.M."

WEDNESDAY:

Notice: R. D. Jones has informed us that he has received several annoying telephone calls because of the error we made in the classified ad yesterday. The ad stands correct as follows: "For sale -- R. D. Jones has one sewing machine for sale. Cheap. Phone

948-0707 after 7 P.M. and ask for Mrs. Kelly who loves with him."

THURSDAY:

Notice: I, R. D. Jones, have no sewing machine for sale. I intentionally broke it. Don't call 948-0707 as I have had the phone disconnected. I have not been carrying on with Mrs. Kelly. Until yesterday she was my housekeeper, but she has now quit.

"I once shot an elephant in my pajamas. How he got in my pajamas I'll never know" Groucho Marx

Often, you may see a sign like the following at a mall:

*Entire store 25% off*

Do I need to buy the whole store, or can I just pick out a few items of interest?

"The word 'good' has many meanings. For example, if a man were to shoot his grandmother at a range of five hundred yards, I should call him a good shot, but not necessarily a good man." (G.K. Chesterton) Joe was in court fighting a ticket for parking his car in a restricted area. The judge asked him if he had anything to say in his defense. "They should not put up such misleading notices", said Joe. "It said, FINE FOR PARKING HERE."

What did Woodsy the Owl mean when he said,

*"I found a smoldering cigarette left by a horse."*

"This is the worst disaster in California since I was elected." --California Governor Pat Brown, discussing a local flood

A friend (Jonathan Sprinkle) pointed out to me that his phone bill always says, "Please make check payable to BellSouth in U.S. Funds" so he always writes his checks out to:

"BellSouth in U.S. Funds"

A friend of mine said this to me the other day. His statement illustrates the potential problem of using "it":

*I will bring my bike tomorrow if it looks nice in the morning.*

Customer support people may get a good laugh when they are asked for help concerning the following message:

*"Please press ANY key to continue..."*

Most keyboards do not have a special "ANY" key.

A similar situation is described in the following:

*Tech Support: "What does the screen say now?"   
Person: "It says, 'Hit ENTER when ready'." Tech Support: "Well?"  
Person: "How do I know when it's ready?*

In Computer Standards and Interfaces, September 1995, Haim Kilov offers the following in his guest editorial:

"Lets look at a naming example attributed by Washington Technology to James Schlesinger

"...when the Marines are 'ordered' to 'secure a building,' they form a landing party and assault it. The same instructions will lead the Army to occupy the building with a troop of infantry, and the Navy will characteristically respond by sending a yeoman to assure that the building lights are turned out. When the Air Force acts on these instructions, what results is a 'three years lease with an option to purchase'."

Politicians are certainly not exempt from inconsistencies:

*"When two trains approach each other at a crossing, both shall come to a full stop and neither shall start up again until the other has gone."*

*Kansas State Legislature, early 1890's*

A statement that I often see at restaurants:

*"Please wait for hostess to be seated"*

* Bill sold the invisible man's hat.
* I saw her duck.
* The chickens are too hot to eat. .
* Students hate annoying professors.
* Sue adores men who love women who don't smoke.
* They hit the man with a cane.
* Happily they left.