

Press 1 for Pig Latin

ROBERT S. SWIATEK



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to the people whose lives have been made
weary because of the wonders of technology

also by Robert S. Swiatek

***The Read My Lips Cookbook:
A Culinary Journey of Memorable Meals***

Don't Bet On It – a novel

***Tick Tock, Don't Stop:
A Manual for Workaholics***

for seeing eye dogs only

***This Page Intentionally Left Blank
– Just Like the Paychecks of the Workers***

I Don't Want to be a Pirate – Writer, maybe

wake up – it's time for your sleeping pill

***Take Back the Earth – The Dumb, Greedy
Incompetents Have Trashed It***

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Introduction

I really am not fond of terrorists. Soon after September 11, 2001, when our president mentioned that the citizens were either with the gub'ment or against, I assumed he meant that either we were fans of those nasty people mentioned in the first sentence or not. My feeling is really personal, as those suicide bombers have made my life more difficult by creating more work for me.

Before that tragic event, I could mail a book or two from my condo with no questions asked. The time involved might be about ten or fifteen minutes. Now when I send two or more books, I need to go to the post office because of the Patriot Act since the package weighs thirteen ounces or more. Apparently a bomb can't be made that weighs less than that. This means a half-hour of my time or more is needed now. It gets more ludicrous. My mailman mentioned to me that were the package to result in fireworks on the plane, the post office couldn't trace the cause if it wasn't first brought to one of their buildings. If you figure out that logic, let me know.

It gets even more bizarre. On a trial basis – one year, that is – I am renting a mail station from Pitney Bowes. By doing that, I can now send packages weighing a pound or more from my residence, without being held back because of the possibility of explosives in the package. I don't have to drive to the post office. Apparently those who fly planes without being able or caring to land them are not allowed to use these gadgets of metered mailing.

On the weekend before the middle of the month in April of 2008, I modified the home page of my web site and loaded it to the Internet. I viewed it and everything seemed in order, including the counter for hits. The next Monday when I checked the site, I noticed that the counter was on strike – that is, it vanished for some reason. I went and loaded what I thought was another reliable one, made the needed modifications and it appeared that all was right with the new web counter, which displayed, “5801.” The next day when I checked the site, the counter hadn’t changed. Is it even worth the effort to have these accounting gizmos? I did check a few days after that and the counter had increased, so perhaps the counter needed a boost that took a day or so.

Like just about everyone reading this, I have a PC – if you read my other books, you know what I think those two letters represent. I have a spreadsheet of addresses that I use in conjunction with a Word file to produce address labels. I “simply” go to the address file and place a “!” in column G of the spreadsheet for the names and addresses I want on the labels and then close the file. Then I open the Word file – one I have already created for the spreadsheet – and click on *Tools* on the top row and from there, press *Mail Merge*. I then get another small screen on which I press *Merge*. After that, I get another screen and I then press *Merge*. Finally, I see the labels and if they are what I want, I can print them. As you may have guessed, I did a mail merge. You also see why the word, *simply* was in quotes above.

When I want to sign off my PC, I have to press *Start*. Then I press *Turn Off Computer*. I then

get another screen and have to press *Turn Off*. Now you know why so many people are turned off by computers, instead of the other way around. If you still love technology, especially relating to PCs and the Internet, let me mention a few of the features with which you should be familiar: *passwords, just do a restart, system is not responding, system processing, file not found* and *give up?* That last one I haven't seen yet, but it should be featured soon. It's probably coming with the next version of the software.

Today, automobiles are so much safer than they were in decades past. There are more airbags and stronger material in the body to preserve the occupants. At the same time, because of these advances, an accident may result in death or a more complicated injury since rescuers can't extricate victims of a car crash in the way it was done before.

I bought a new Subaru in 2005, having had good experiences with that product on two other occasions. About a few weeks later, I heard a car horn sounding and discovered it was accompanied by blinking of the parking lights as well, and that this greeting came from my car. This happened too many times, so I took the car to the dealer, who replaced the alarm system. Things improved, but there were still a few recurrences of these unwanted symphonies – I prefer the music from my CD player, which on occasion has behaved badly. The difficulty was finally gone in 2007, when I bought a Prius.

Someone said that many times you trade one problem for another and unfortunately I found that out with the Toyota vehicle. When I put the car into reverse, I hear a truly annoying sound of warning

and see a camera-dependent screen on my dash with a view of what's behind me. This is so I don't back into another vehicle or some building. One day while I was backing up, the screen indicated I had plenty of room ahead of the car behind, so I kept going and ran into the vehicle. I left the scene quickly so as not to have my insurance premiums increase. Obviously, I'm kidding, but I would have made contact with that automobile and I'd have to pay for my bad judgment had I relied on that camera.

Printed on my passenger-side mirror are those wretched words, "Objects in mirror are closer than they appear" – a possible book title for one of my books – and it seems that they apply to that other view that you shouldn't bother with. Unfortunately you can't turn either the sound or picture off, something you can do with your TV.

I own a Sony television with a remote that has too many buttons. One of them is for muting. It can really come in handy on occasion, but I don't use it that often. Most of the time I press other buttons, such as the volume control or channel selector. On more occasions than I prefer, I depress a button that is far away from the *mute* thing and the sound goes off. You might ask why I don't return the remote for another, but it's past the warranty – in years, not months. That usually happens with guarantees, with the rule being that once it expires, the product will break down or fail. There should never have been such a problem with the remote anyway. It's too bad we can't use this remote on politicians, lawyers, realtors or businessmen.

If your video recorder – if you still have one – is a relatively recent model, you know that the

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