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Edict 2008-6

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College of DuPage

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Edict 2008-6

Diane S. Mattison

An edict went out from the bureau of literacy of the United States Government on April 12, the year of our Lord 2008, banning forever from usage the word “and.” The edict declared this word so insidious, so ubiquitous, that it was cluttering the vocabulary as well as corrupting young minds, preventing them from developing proper communication. Some people were even ending their sentences with an “and,” expecting other people to finish their thoughts.

A list was printed suggesting substitutes such as “including,” “as well as,” “even though.” Prizes would be given for innovative substitutes. Penalties would be severe for any disobedience. Anyone using the forbidden three letter word would have all writing paraphernalia, from high-end computers to #2 pencils, confiscated. Furthermore, to get people used to this edict, for the first year the forbidden three letter (- - -) word could not be used within any word, either.

Needless to say, p- - -emonium ensued. Writers still wrote, although their books became shorter, as did the daily (now weekly) newspaper. Publications for the masses became scarce as people cancelled subscriptions to material they found awkward to underst- - - or not worth the effort. They found they lost their thoughts with no connective - - - to help them move along. The only happy people remaining seemed to be those who didn’t read but got all their information from TV or radio.

On the plus side, shorter sentences came back into vogue. The pace of life picked up a bit.

But rebellion came. Students of the College of DuPage arose, led by those who were “streams of consciousness” writers. With the help of the townspeople of Glen Ellyn, they orchestrated a unique, desperate protest. They would do something that could not be reported unless the Forbidden Word was used. Men who were used to being called “pa” volunteered to be transmogrified into p- - -as. This was martyrdom, of course, since Glen Ellyn had no st- - -s of bamboo with which to keep them alive. The President - - - Secretary of the Viola Women’s Garden Club took root in their yards - - - the pachys- - -ra is there to this day. When the Mayor decided to take a st- - - he turned into a cement statue on Main Street, where the horse trough used to be.

Just as the movement was gaining steam, the students ran out of fresh ideas. Fortunately, the government caved in. A new edict came from the Literacy Bureau. “The use of the word ‘and’ will be allowed once again, and again, and again if necessary, to prevent further loss of life. We regret any inconvenience we may have caused.”