Welcome to Jackdaw '96

Veteran Jackdaw readers can skip this section.

After a few years of publishing this, I met Ray Bradbury (*The* sci-fi Ray Bradbury). Bombastic-enthusiastic as ever, he shouts, "Here's that fellow who sends out that eclectic collection of sayings and quotes ...that...that Jackdaw card! Welcome!"
(Since then, we've been "Ray" and "Other Ray" - depending who's writing whom.)
I fled home, snatched up my dictionary and pawed thru to the "J's". There it was: "Jackdaw, " a bird which flits hither and yon finding, filching and fleeing with any and all shiny, glitzy items and with those, proceeds to build its nest.

Perfect for me - one who has lifted, clipped, ripped and stolen from newsletters, newspapers, NPR, TV, ads, E mail and conversations. Herewith, some events, thoughts, quotes, opinions and adventures of '96.

Joke for Bradbury: "Very funny, Scotty. Now beam down my clothes."

Get used to it
Global language changes weekly. The media feeds us. New names. Strange-to-us names. Impossible to pronounce names. Places and people we never heard of. Slobodan. Milosevic. Netanyahu. Kofi Annan replacing (say-it-twice) Boutros Boutros Ghali. Mogadishu. Hutus. Tutsis. Rwanda's been a horror daily mantra for a time. Move up the map and we learn Chechnya is a country. Grozny is a city. Movladi Udugov is a deputy prime minister. Of all, my two favorites: Sergei V. Yastrzhembsky, Yeltsin's press spokesman. (Call him "Yaz" for short) — but the winner is... Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngeb endu was za banga. Wonder how he answers his phone? That moniker translates to: "The all-powerful warrior, who because of his endurance and inflexible will to win goes from conquest to conquest leaving fire in his wake."
Warning: Better not call him "Moe" or you might be the victim of his wa za banga. (Whatever happened to Larry, Moe, and Curly?)

For Sports Fans:
Vince Lombardi, legendary coach of the Green Bay Packers football team, was a god to fans and players. His discipline ranked right up there with Attila the Hun.

Quotes from his players. "Lombardi had a great threshold for pain. Our injuries never bothered him." From Henry Jordan, Packer tackle, when asked if Lombardi was authoritarian: "When coach tells you to sit down, you don't look for a chair." Or Fuzzy Thurston's great line: "Every season started the same way. Coach would hold up a football in his hand and say 'This is a football'—and Max McGee would say, 'Wait Coach! You're going too fast'— then the season would begin."

Indisputable Fact: There are two kinds of people: those who finish what they start and so on...

Few Quickies
"Consider sending a postcard to Jim Rapp promising "I will write to you at length in two days." Immediately on that same postcard by return mail, Rapp replies: "I'm 68 years old. Waiting is not my thing." Ooo-kay...

"All my life I've heard if you do "good things" there will be a reward in heaven. What if there isn't a heaven? Hell with heaven. I think doing good things now might be the answer.

"If you can think about it, why not do it? — Bob Jablonski (Hmmmm.)

The Book
Our WAYMISH book. Released in April, sold out in July. reprinted in August. Ready to reprint again.
Oh...WAYMISH stands for..."Why Are You Making It So Hard...for me to give you my money?" It's all about lousy customer service. And its selling nicely.
Ted Cohn and I figured there are already more than enough "Here's How" good service books, so ours is the reverse - true stories about rotten service - and we named names.

Big Time
The big surprise is the size of orders coming from large companies - 100 from Karl Otto Skoglund's Classic Hotels in Norway; 200+ from Grappone Auto in New Hampshire; 100 from Pasadena Federal Credit Union; and now, **900** for the managers of Advanced Auto Parts in Roanoke VA. Wow! Why so many copies? Because these companies and Cary Zucker's Neutron Industries are using the book to train all the customer contact people. Why does it work?...because the stories are not our company, not "us." There is no personal accusation, no threat. So commenting on the mistakes of other companies is easy.

They Talk!
It's amazing the ideas employees are contributing. Why didn't they speak up before? It's the same old story: *Nobody ever asked them.*

If you don't have a copy of the book (or need a 100), call toll free 1-888 WAYMISH. And be sure to ask about the new Training Manual.

And of course, suggestions for speaking - my delivering the WAYMISH message in person at sales and customer service meetings are definitely solicited. See insert. Or phone. Fax. E-mail. Thank you!

Agree?
Of course there's such thing as Luck.
How else can you explain your enemy's success?

Keen Answer:
A shall-go-nameless friend imbibed considerably. Late, late at night on a deserted freeway he drove past the major interchange to home. He put his car in reverse and proceeded to back up on the freeway. Egads! A lurking highway patrolman suddenly materialized and demanded, "Have you been drinking?" Our friend answered with a slow smile: "You don't think I'd do this if I was sober, do you ?..." [The cop let him go.]

Morning after: There's too much blood in my caffeine system.

Rebel
I asked George Goodwin for his E mail address. "If I had one I wouldn't give it to you. The art of conversation is being lost. My phone number is still the same - 404 875 1444." Tired of the internet? Give George a call.

Observation: Rule #1: The only people making real money on the Internet are people who are telling other people how to make real money on the Internet.

Excerpts from official Royal Navy fitness reports:
His men would follow him anywhere - but only out of curiosity.
This medical officer used my ship to carry his genitals from port to port and my officers to carry him from bar to bar.
Since my last report he has reached rock bottom - and has started to dig.
She sets low personal standards and consistently fails to achieve them.
This officer should go far - the sooner he starts, the better.
Works well under constant supervision or when cornered like a rat.

Horrifying thought. 80% of all paper filed has never been looked at again.

Feeling poorly?
In the "Boys and their Toys" game, private jet aircraft is "it." The players are top corporations, Eisner, Tom Cruise, Arnold Schwarzenegger and naturally the cash-ladened sultans of the oil countries. At the head of the pack is King Fahd of Saudi Arabia. His 24 karat-gold threaded upholstered seats cost a cool $50,000 each. His Boeing 747 is three stories tall, connected by an elevator, with a complete operating room stocked with his blood should he require surgery in the air.

He owns global transponders and satellites and is electronically connected to the Cleveland Clinic Heart Center. Just in case. And to be assured he is headed in the right direction for immortality, his throne, controlled by navigational instruments, constantly is pointing to Mecca. Oh, in case of human enemy attack, his castle-in-the-air is armed with the same U. S. missiles as Air Force One. May the Force be with The Fahd.

Cut "that" out!
Bob Dale, skilled writer, friend and master teacher laid this one on us during an Atlanta copy writing class about 100 years ago. Its become a permanent reminder to drop the most unneeded word in the language. Ready? "That that that that man used was totally unnecessary." Got it? Then Edit.

Literary Career?
Granddaughter Isabel (now 8) has a school writing assignment. The title, you ask? : "Pearleen Schmitz," she explains. "It's about a machure (phonetic spelling) woman who is a TV Food Show host who has strange habits, wriggles and shakes and can't help but dance wildly in elevators, never has matching sox and has her furniture covered in Winnie the Poo fabrics." Lisa asks: "Pardon me?" She replies: "Mom...it's not a novel YET. This is a draft!"

Choices
Given 12 options for after-class activities, Isabel picked the following: year book and web page design plus African drumming. [Nicely balanced curriculum, dontcha think?]

The Harsh Truth Just before Christmas Isabel approaches Lisa with a very serious face.
"Mom...I have a really important question for you: Are you Santa Claus?"
Well....ummm....kinda..ahhh...Yes! Iz: "That's OK. I thought so." Half an hour goes by.
Isabel rushes into the room wide-eyed:
"Oh my God - then you're the Easter Bunny, too!"

Thing of the Past
David Brinkley in his retirement tv appearances delivered some dandies. (Now read this in his trademark punctuated style): "All national conventions - could spare us the endless dribble of rhetoric - by simply dropping the speaker through a trap door after 10 minutes. - Any country - that can put a man on the moon ... certainly can build a trapdoor". [Goodnight David.]

Pierson's Pearls
Why is 'abbreviation' such a long word?
Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.
The more people I meet, the more I like my dog.
IRS: We've got what it takes to take what you've got.
I want to die in my sleep like my grandfather...Not screaming and yelling like the passengers in his car...

Ouch. Honest criticism is hard to take — particularly from a relative, a friend, an acquaintance or a total stranger.

Silly Spelling
English doesn't make a lot of sense, does it?
Why is "Europe" spelled that way when we all pronounce it "Yurrup"?
And how about "Through"... "Thru" does it very nicely for me, .
"Tomoro" says the same thing quicker than "Tomorrow" .
"Tomorrow" has more useless duplication than a government bureaucracy.
And what's the "w" for in "answer"? I don't hear it.
Don't you say "Wensday" not Wed-nes-day?

Time to clean up the language, guys.

Awk
Speaking of Jackdaws, did you hear what one crow said to another?
"So, bred any good rooks lately?"

Bumpersticker:
I'm not a brat! Am Not! Am Not! Am Not!

Question:
What kind of writing pays best?
Answer: Ransom notes.

A bright future
Newspaper boy outside large business office: "Extra! Extra! Read all about it! Two men swindled! Intrigued, a man buys paper, scans it, says, "There's nothing here about a swindle..." "Extra! Extra! Read all about it - three men swindled!"

Get Sane
Unplug the phone occasionally.
Stop speaking to friends who begin every sentence with "I".
If you haven't touched it, moved it or used it for 6 months throw it OUT.
Stop feeling guilty ...about anything. Just give it your best shot - every time.
Open a window and breathe in. There's a whole world out there.
Go to church sometime, besides Christmas and Easter.
Or sit in a synagogue or meditate in a mosque.
Window shop. Or wander a mall.
You owe yourself some Time ——alone.
While you're at it, forgive somebody. You ain't perfect either.

Listen Up! Become a convert to my new faith: **complete faith in yourself.**

To find out how good you are...
pick out something you thought was impossible....
and do it. Amaze yourself - at least once this year.

The Dinner
At Clark's in London. Peter Ekelund of Sweden-London-Milan, Jamie Sifton, transplanted Canadian and me, on my stopover to speak in Amsterdam.

"This is the future!", Peter exclaimed, "one of these universal phone chips, (showing a fingernail sized chip implanted in the guts of his tiny pocket unit.) "Now all you need is a PC, e-mail, a modem and this phone. There's money available everywhere on the globe and with just these you can move it here, move it there and do business. Imagination is all you need...and (laughing) possibly another glass of this fine wine."

When the bill came, Jamie delivered a gem: "Wait," he said, reaching for the considerable tab. "This is my neighborhood. Let me take it so they'll remember me here."

Rhyming
Here lies the body of Robert J.
Who died defending his right of way
He was in the right as he drove along
But he's just as dead as if he were wrong.

So Determined!
Coach Gregg Popvich told his San Antonio basketball team! We need a win badly - more than food, more than sleep, more than anything!"
Reminded me of the college spirit we projected during student days at Harvard football games, fluttering our white handkerchiefs toward the playing field and gaily urging our good Crimson team to "Fight fiercely fellows, fight fiercely."

Fast Start
'Jever notice? Heroes in trouble in the movies run to their car, jump in and instantly drive off! How come I have to... first find my keys, get them out, unlock the car door, insert the key in the ignition, turn the key, pump the accelerator, start the engine and then drive away? (Gene Pepper sez all movie stars leave their keys in the ignition. Is that true, Gene?)

Family Question: I've always wanted to trace my family history but cant afford it.
Answer: Run for public office.

Know him? He's the kind of guy you say Hello to...and he's stuck for an answer.

The Cat
Pet shopping means window shopping. And there "they" were, half a dozen kitties lying lazily in furry clumps, half dozing, eyelids drooping. But not the black and white one! Jabbing paws at its loutish companions, rudely shouldering them to "wake up!", leaping over lounging bodies...that's the cat for us!

Now for the naming. Momentous decision for an 8 year old. Isabel immediately said "Hank Aaron!". WHAAT? Where did that come from? Flashback: 7 months earlier while visiting, a plea: "Can we rent a baseball movie tonight?" (She has an A's cap, runs out in the morning to get the sports page to see how her Oakland team is doing.)

The video store had next-to-nothing in choices. "The Hank Aaron Story" was it. Baseball? No. It was a sad back-of-the-bus discrimination saga. We sat thru it all the way.
Months pass. You forget. She doesn't. Iz insists "Hank" is the cat's name. Except that He is a She. No matter. Go with it. So what's a little gender confusion here and there? This is San Francisco.

Earth-shattering Thoughts:
Nothing is as stressful as trying to be a different person than you are.

Some people spend more time maintaining their lawns than they do their relationships.

A filing cabinet is nothing but a system for losing things alphabetically.

In spite of the cost of living, it's still popular.

Show me a man who walks with his head high, and I'll show you a man who hasn't quite gotten used to his new bifocals.

The Trip:
Frits von Dorst invited me to speak at Dutch Direct Marketing Symposium in Maastricht. Did it before. Love the group. Immediately marketing guru-close friend- and joke collector Pieter van den Busken who hears everything happening in Yurrup says, "Come speak in Amsterdam on the way."

Do that. Visit Hans Bouton in Delft.
Hang out with Michael de Jong. Relish a marvelous welcome dinner with Frits and Friends. Attend his successful symposium. No problem. Now the problem...

Frits insists I stay and introduce the "WAYMISH" in the huge breakfast hall Tuesday morning. Anything for Frits, but — I had to be in Orlando Florida that same Tuesday night. What airlines connection will do that? So! The KLM feeder commuter leaves late from Maastricht. Fog. In Amsterdam I run full speed the entire length of Schipol (Hey - am I in good shape or wot?) to farthest gate. When you're late, it's always the farthest gate, right? I made it. My bags didn't. And we were off to Iceland.

Iceland? Yeah. Iceland to Orlando. Ah, should be a quiet late night. I'll sleep. No...plane is full of excited Icelandic kids with mouse-ear hats going to Disneyland in ...yes, Orlando. Arrived 10 pm. No bags. Washed out my airport "running" shirt in the hotel bathroom sink. Dried it with the hair dryer. Spoke 3 hours next morning for American Red Ball and they said it was great. Came back to LA, carrying van den Busken's unforgettable gift - a hand carved train with the letters W A Y M I S H glued to the top of each little wooden car. Try explaining that to airport officials as you rush thru security. Ah, the life of a speaker.

Won't Hurtcha.
Nod and smile at a stranger. It's contagious.
Wink in greeting when someone catches your eye.
Compliment the next person who serves you.
Wave to a passing motorist. (Betcha they'll wave back.)
Send a Thank You note for small favors.
People are dying for recognition.
Give it away. Costs you nothing. Feels Good.

Slow down!
Man, it drives me crazy. People call on voice mail, leave their message carefully and then at the end rattle off their phone number in a blur of sound: "Sixtiveighsvnohtwo nine three." I got the "nine three." Same thing with zip codes ninsvnfiv06. What is it - a contest to speed talk?

Uh Oh.
Does your night time Resolve ever Dissolve by morning? Mine does. Occasionally I love to stay in bed a "little longer". I count that extra time as unpaid vacation, leisure, bliss. Like the Internet, my mind flies out and roams the world producing vivid pictures of the overnight train trip with Chris to Zurich, meeting Hans Goldman on Zermatt with Lisa, the venerable Palace in Montreux, Boitels in Meilen, the cathedral in Milano. I can re-see the sudden attack of the gypsies in the Rome railroad station. Or the rainy night bus tour in Rome with the crazy lady shouting at her husband "Here! Video this! No, No! Over here!" and none of us could even see out the windows of the bus for the slashing rain. (Can you laugh in your sleep?) Yikes, there's the alarm. Get-up time.

Exclusively Yours
James Gordon Bennett ran the New York Herald. Was paid a million a year. This was more than a hundred years ago. He had a yacht with a steamboat and a cow - so he could serve fresh milk and butter, of course. Not a piker, he once tipped a porter on a train $14,000. It is said he spent $40 million in his lifetime.

He dearly loved a small restaurant in Monte Carlo. He would go there every day he could, sit at the same table and order the same meal: mutton chops. One day he arrived to find other people at "his" table. He bought the restaurant on the spot for $40,000, kicked out the people at his table. After the mutton lunch, he gave the waiter a nice tip - the restaurant.

But there was a proviso - he could eat a free meal at the same table whenever he wanted and there always had to be mutton on the menu. [A man of taste, would you say?]

Check It Out
Does your life look like your desk? Does your desk look like your life? Mine does.

Still. Seen on the tombstone of a lawyer; *Motion denied.*

Ooops
Ever hear of the Tax Compliance Gap? By the IRS's own estimates it missed collecting about $170 Billion last year. That's about 14% of what was totally owed and (loved this part) "was easily enough to balance the federal budget and give every tax payer a big tax cut." Makes you feel warm all over, doesn't it?

Poise: the ability to continue speaking fluently while the other person is picking up the check.

Optimists. Americans *hope* they'll be wealthy someday - but they're *positive* they can get one more brushful of paint out of an empty can.

Rules are rules
A man gets on one of the crowded buses and heads toward Centennial Park. He leans over to the bus driver and says: "I'll get off at the corner after this one." "Can't do that," says bus driver shaking her head. "Why not?" "Against the rules." "What rules?" "You have to go to the end of the line, get another bus and come back here." The passenger thinks for a few seconds and asks: "Is there any rule against smoking?" "Absolutely." "What would you do if I lit a cigarette?" "Put you off the bus." So this savvy guy lit a cigarette.

Ideas to consider:
Take today off. Call in well.

Consider: There is no time like the pleasant.

If you're not living on the edge you're taking up too much space.

Blessed are they who can laugh at themselves, for they shall never cease to be amused.

Mothers' Savvy
Will Rogers' mother says that when he was ten, she had trouble persuading him to tuck in his shirttails in school or when company came to dinner. Then she sewed lace around the bottom of every shirt he owned. It worked wonders.

Then there's the mother of little John Charles, who found his first report card distinctly encouraging: "John Charles is a bright, alert lad," was the teacher's comment, "but I believe he spends too much time playing with the girls. However, I am working on a plan which I believe will break him of the habit."
John Charles' mother acknowledged receipt of the report and added this note of her own: "Let me know if your plan works and I'll try it on his father."

Thank You - but —
Mel Torme, jazz vocalist extraordinaire, sent his blind pal George Shearing a gift. In addition to being a jazz pianist extraordinaire, Shearing is an amateur gourmet chef. Appropriately, the gift was a gold-plated cheese grater. George sent a note back: "Thank you Mel, but I must say it was the most violent novel I've ever read."

Don't Do This!
Starch your roommate's underwear
Enroll your enemies in all sweepstakes mailings
Turn on the sprinklers at a lawn party
Glue the toilet paper in the guest room

Show Me the Money
L. Ron Hubbard once spoke many years ago at a Science Fiction Writers' Convention. He said there's money in writing, but if you want to make real money, you need to start a religion. Later he remembered a Martian religion he'd concocted in one of his sci-fi books and founded his own. The Martian religion?.....Dianetics.

Tell Me When
The little girl assured her teacher, "Of course I know how to spell banana. I just never know when to stop."

Robert Fulghum (The "Everything I Learned in Kindergarten" man) is an absolutely superb speaker.
Connects with an audience like most speakers *wish* they could.
Author. Preacher. Teacher. Philosopher.
Man with a comedic turn of mind.

Sets his automobile odometer for 100. Files and turns off to see what's there.

Thumbs thru the yellow pages, calls and asks cheerfully "What do you do?"

Stands incognito on the corner at Christmas time ringing a bell and soliciting donations for the Salvation Army.

And he creates posters - marvelous posters. Here's one:

FAMILY MAN
1. Children are not pets.
2. The life they live and the life you perceive them to be living is not the same life.
3. Don't take what your children do too personally.
4. Don't keep scorecards on them - a short memory is useful.
5. Dirt and mess are a breeding ground for well-being.
6. Stay out of their rooms after puberty.
7. Stay out of their friendships and love-life unless invited in.
8. Don't worry that they never listen to you; worry that they're always watching you.
9. Learn from them; they have much to teach you.
10. Love them long; let them go early.

And finally....

I believe imagination is stronger than knowledge.
That myth is more potent than history.
That hope always triumphs over experience —
That laughter is the only cure for grief
And I believe love is stronger than death.

[This last dedicated to soul-close
Wade Cannon who left us January 27th.
Man, am I gonna miss that guy.]

The message:
Better do it now. This is It.

So, it would be a good idea to stay in touch.
Yes?

We really need your e-mail address!

Fax 818 798 2310. Phone 818 798 1617
Toll free 1 888 W A Y M I S H

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