

## Proper use of English

Roy Meachum's column of Feb. 15 contains the sentence, "While virtually unknown to the general public, Mr. Hays kept a tight-fist on all privileges and prerequisites, the 'perks' so necessary to sustain the ego that beats in every political heart."

"Prerequisite" is totally inappropriate as used. "Perquisite," meaning "a privilege, gain or profit incidental to regular salary or wages," is the correct word for the sentence. Furthermore there is no need whatsoever for a hyphen between the words "tight" and "fist."

BRUCE E. IVINS  
Frederick

## Waldenbooks wimps out

It is a pathetic day indeed when the Ayatollah Khomeini dictates what we in Frederick can read, and that day, incredibly enough, is here. Waldenbooks has announced that it is removing copies of Salman Rushdie's novel, "The Satanic Verses," from its stores.

All it takes for this phenomenal event to occur is for hordes of people who have not read the book to attack and destroy American property abroad and for an Iranian despot, presiding over one of the most repressive and violent regimes in this world today (under the guise of religion), to offer a reward to any in the hordes who wish to spread violence and murder abroad.

Shall we Americans be denied the right to read a work of fiction because violent people half a world away demand it? Outrageous!

The owners of Waldenbooks may be this easily intimidated, but I'll bet many Americans are not. Other bookstores in this country better uphold the American principle of freedom of speech. Let us buy books at those stores; Waldenbooks can open a shop in Teheran.

MARTHA POLKEY  
Frederick

7/22/89

## Roy Meachum



### 'Cousins' daughter

My wife has a certain laugh that comes snapping out like the crack of a bullwhip. It always startles me.

Last Friday the film "Cousins" called forth a series of cracks and snaps, the likes of which I cannot recall hearing from Sharon Delight Meachum.

As we walked out of the theater that night, my wife said, "It's been a long time since I've enjoyed a movie that much." Good marriages are not built on husbands chiming, "That was obvious." So I simply said that it had been a good show.

In fact, as we later agreed, Sharon and I both believe "Cousins" is an extraordinary film. It possesses dimensions and facets that transcend its category of "romantic comedy." It struck us as better, in many ways, than its progenitor, the 1975 French cinematic classic, *Cousin, Cousine*.

In the first place, there is the humor that lightens the burden of a story about people trapped in dead-end marriages. The first film version had as its target the Gallic funny bone which has a different center than an American taste.

In addition, since neither of us speaks colloquial French, we were each dependent on sub-titles to follow the action in the original movie. This time around we could catch the nuances always lost in those summarizing translations flashed upon the screen.

But at the same time, "Cousins" sacrifices none of the ethnic flavor, as my wife observed, that gave a special spice to *Cousin, Cousine*.

Instead of a Parisian-provincial mix, the two families in the American adaptation are saucy Italian emigrant and rollicking Polish-American; the latter epitomized by Lloyd Bridges as the robust father who owns a string of gas stations in the upper Northwest. Oregon, I believe.

Bridges' son is played by Ted Danson who earned considerable credit for the great success of "Three Men and a Baby," along with co-star Tom Selleck.

Fortunately for my particular enjoyment of "Cousins," the Italian emigrant leading lady comes to life in the person of Isabella Rossellini. Some of the time Sharon was laughing, I sat in rapt fascination, carried away by the remarkable resemblance the actress bears to her parents.

Isabella has the over-sized nose

and the receding chin or her father, Italian director Roberto Rossellini. But she impressed me as one of the most beautiful women I've seen on the screen since her late mother, Ingrid Bergman.

For younger readers, perhaps I should explain that the Bergman-Rossellini affair touched off a terrible scandal nearly 40 years ago. It also produced a son and twin girls. Isabella was the only child to follow their parents' career, as far as I know.

At any rate, in "Cousins" Ms. Rossellini establishes a claim on stardom in her own right. She brings to her character a wonderful combination of flowing tranquility,

tumbling mirth and promising sensuality. She is, at times, an essential earth mother, a giggling girl and a reluctant, although tempting, seductress. At all times, her full-blown female remains a fully decent human being and a very strong person.

As you may have surmised, while my wife was snapping the air with her marvelous laughter, her husband was falling in love with another woman. When I confessed, the redheaded Quaker sympathized. Sharon understood I had been captivated before — both on and off the screen — by those graces Isabella Rossellini inherited from her mother.

Forming "an unnatural attachment" for Ingrid Bergman came naturally to my generation of American males. It started when she was the youthful star in the 1943 movie adaptation of Hemingway's "For Whom the Bell Tolls." It lasted until 1950 when she abandoned us (and Hollywood) for Signor Rossellini.

I am no authority on why the female half of this nation boycotted the movies Ms. Bergman made with her Italian director-husband. But many American males stayed away, because she had broken our hearts. (Guys, shoot me if I am wrong.)

In any event, after the Rossellinis divorced, the "divine" Ingrid and her audience found each other again, crowned by her 1974 selection for her last Oscar. Her third Academy Award was a love-gift from Hollywood to the Swedish star, already fighting the cancer that took her life eight years later.

However, her illness remained a

secret until just before her death. In reading her obituaries, I discovered that Ms. Bergman had received the diagnosis before her 1972 appearance at the Kennedy Center, which provided the interview that was reason for our meeting. As it happened, we spent over an hour in her Watergate Hotel suite, waiting on a TV film crew; much of it alone.

Since Ingrid Bergman considered me her guest, she acted the thoughtful hostess, soothing my impatience (and embarrassment) with my delayed colleagues. She passed the time by trying to make me comfortable, telling stories in the voice that I had fallen in love with years before.

The film crew arrived, of course. The lengthy interview was divided over a full week of TV newscasts. I never spoke with Ms. Bergman again.

Isabella Rossellini is not her mother. In her new movie she stands on her own talented feet. She would be a star for me if she did not summon up the special warmth of the memory of that time in a Washington hotel. (But she does.)

The laughter that "Cousins" brought booming from my wife might be the best reason for most younger folks to go see the film. However, those of you who remember the radiating glory of Ingrid Bergman in her daughter can touch a golden moment from the past. I thought I'd pass the tip along.



Letters to the editor  
News-Post  
Frederick, Md. 21701

2/22/89

With the entire civilized world in turmoil, aghast over Muslim state terrorism, Iran's multimillion dollar bounty on the head of a novelist whose writing that true man of the true god ~~Khomeini~~ does not ~~look~~ like, what words of wisdom do we get from our local ~~new~~ maven, lover of and expert on all things Islamic?

We are edified by his chatelaine of Fenseless Manor's "marvelous laughter," her "laugh that comes snapping out like the <sup>c/</sup>crack of a bullwhip."

Twelve European countries kicked Iran's ambassador <sup>out</sup> in <sup>an unprecedented</sup> joint protest over this state incitation to murder and threats to bomb all publishers and bookstores that have this novel, and we get from our sage self-puffery, what he as a self-described <sup>had</sup> "good husband" said in response to his wife's comment on her enjoyment of a movie!

~~Khomeini~~ assures all would-be assassins <sup>2</sup> that they'd go straight to heaven <sup>if</sup> they ~~murder~~ <sup>murder</sup> this novelist; Iran's ambassador leaves a meeting with the pope and says he is a willing assassin; Britain has to hide and protect her citizen-novelist and elsewhere guards are mounted at bookstores; our own government condemns this bestiality guised as the true religion; our own bookstores <sup>don't</sup> ~~fear~~ showing the novel <sup>fearing</sup> out of fear of danger to their own employees and patrons; and in the face of this and much more world-wide protest and outrage, <sup>when</sup> the millions promised to an assassin <sup>are</sup> multiplied and ~~Khomeini~~ renews his threat and order, <sup>and</sup> from our sage we get <sup>an</sup>! ecstasy about a comedy!

Millions of Muslims have been slaughtered by other Muslims while he has been <sup>imagine any</sup> atop that Frederick ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> Olympus ~~created~~ by his own self-concept and pontifications; ~~More than~~ 5,000 Muslim citizens of Iraq <sup>were</sup> ~~were~~ gassed to death on <sup>a</sup> single day; ~~and~~ day after day more Arabs in Lebanon kill each other than have died in more than a year of the Arab insurrection in the Holy Land <sup>in</sup> and in all those columns there has been not a single mention.

Instead, there have been innumerable tirades, all misinformative and misleading when not overtly false, tirades against <sup>Israel</sup> ~~Israel~~ and Jews. But never any information about the

*Muslim*  
 frightful horrors in the Muslim world, no condemnation of terrorism when the murder of  
 an aged American Jew causes an international uproar, none when ~~the innocents~~ <sup>non-Jewish</sup> in hundreds  
 of acts of violence throughout the world are murdered senseless <sup>essly</sup> none when women and  
 children in airports are assassinated. None when Jewish ~~the~~ <sup>non-Jewish</sup> places of worship are destroyed.

Years after those who read what he boasts of reading knew the Muslim world had and ~~used~~  
~~was using~~ chemical warfare he has yet to mention this. The international <sup>W</sup> consternation  
 over Iraq's use of it against its own Muslim citizens, after confirmation of what had  
 been published much earlier of Libya's monster plant for manufacturing chemical weapons?  
 Not ~~for~~ <sup>it</sup> for his readers.

Not when he could, as he has for years, contrive countless <sup>incitations</sup> tirades against Israel,  
 whose survival has always been in question, and against Jews, an accurate statement that  
 has been edited out of some of what I have written.

In this Khomaniacal, subhuman assault on the basis of all civilization, when even  
 those Arabs who have cause to fear assassination by <sup>these</sup> the extremists, have condemned this  
 recrudescence of a barbaric past, this reborn, would-be Genghis Khan, with the entire  
 civilized world unified in indignation and outrage, he is still unable to utter a single  
 word not favorable to any part of the Islamic world, not even this part regarded as the  
 great danger it is to them by most of the Islamic world.

This new barbarism to which he is so indifferent when he can instead get paid for  
 revelling in his wife's laughter, is over a <sup>or</sup> novel. Yet the Islamic world <sup>is and has been</sup> publishing <sup>as</sup>  
<sup>non-fiction</sup> ~~and has been~~ the most indecent fabrications manufactured and used ~~to~~ to incite ignorant  
 masses into killing Jews, like <sup>that</sup> the Czarist creation, the forgeries, "The Protocols of  
 the Learned Elders of Zion." <sup>(a local)</sup> No Muslim protest over this incitation of Muslim masses  
 today, not even a comment on the floor of this <sup>inspiration to religious violence</sup> indecency into the "holy Land from Syria,  
 where ~~it has been and is printed and from where it is distributed widely~~ <sup>if there is</sup>. Even the in-  
 credible allegation that Jews kill Christians ~~for~~ to have their blood for making matzohs.

Red matzohs I have never seen, but pictures of police protecting bookstores and  
 publishers' offices I have seen <sup>international</sup> fear of this Islamic state terrorism


is a fact of which nobody can be ignorant today.

<sup>But</sup> ~~And~~ the real Roy Meachum, not the ~~flse~~ false one of his Frederick creation we <sup>can</sup>  
~~now have~~ <sup>now</sup> all <sup>it</sup> ~~see~~. He is utterly incapable of honest commentary, unable to pretend any  
 more than he is a dispassionate and fair ~~commentator~~ <sup>A</sup> and from this propagandist's  
 exploitation of the role of journalistic commentator he ought be consigned to the  
 journalistic cesspool from which his hate-incitations <sup>come</sup> ~~exude~~

Harold Weisly

I had intended this as a letter but if you would consider it as an oped page contribution, that would be fine. I suggest the caption, "Journalism's Cesspool."

Harold Weisberg

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Harold Weisberg", written in dark ink on a light-colored background.