

# SECOND WIND

by Jens Andersen

In my review of *Rig* last Tuesday I quoted Keith Ashwell praising the "discrete attention to characterization" which he imagined he saw in it, and took the liberty of plugging in a "(sic!)" after the "discrete". Two days later a very concise note reached my desk (reprinted in its entirety above).

What my anonymous critic seems to be saying (and I hope he/she will correct me if I am wrong) is that I have no business inserting the "sic" after "discrete" since "discrete" is a perfectly respectable word.

However, the reason for inserting "sic" has nothing to do with whether "discrete" is a genuine word (anyone who has taken Math 202, Stats 255, or read a music magazine in the last few years will know that the word exists). The reasons for the "sic" are two: a) Ashwell clearly meant "discreet," not "discrete" (the latter word is nonsensical as Ashwell uses it), and b) if the "sic" was not inserted, a *Gateway* reader would not know whether the error represented a mental lapse by Ashwell (or the *Journal's* typesetters), or if it was just a typo by the *Gateway*.

The letter from "WELL" WISHER is

not unusual; there is widespread misunderstanding of the proper use of the word "sic". Most people have the vague idea that the word simply denotes an error in English. But this is only part of the story. To quote *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*:

*sic: intentionally so written - used after a printed word or passage to indicate that it is intended exactly as printed or to indicate that it exactly reproduces an original.*

In theory, then, you could put a "sic" after any quote, or even after every word of a quote. [e.g. "I think (sic), therefore I am (sic)"], just so your reader knows you have faithfully reproduced the quote from snout to tailbone. Or if you are an extremist, you can even use it after every (sic) word (sic) of (sic) your own (sic) writing (sic), to emphasize that you mean every word you say.

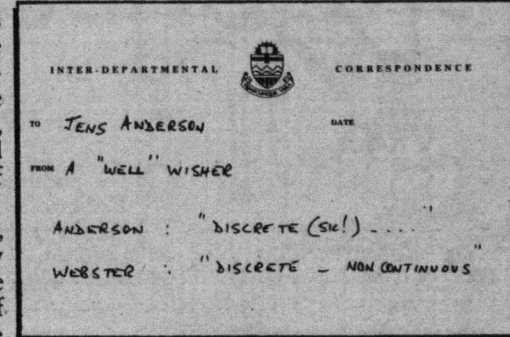
In practice, though, it is generally tagged on only when incorrect, archaic or unusual English has been employed, and the reader, obviously in a state of doubt, needs to be told that such use is intentional, or due to an original author, and not the person quoting him.

On a newspaper the "sic" has its natural habitat on the letters section of the editorial page, since a) the average letter-writer is somewhat less literate than the average member of the journalistic elite, and b) the newspaper staff is more inclined to correct its own blunders than those of outsiders.

Even among journalists, however, there are differences of opinion about how much mercy to give letter-writers. One faction maintains that the literacy of correspondents is no measure of the validity of their opinions, and therefore all errors in English should be corrected and no "sics" used. At the opposite end of the spectrum are the hard-liners, who would sic a "sic" on every Tom, Harry and Dick who writes "availible" (sic) or "exellent" (sic), on the theory that letter-writers should be house-broken in the same way that cats and dogs are house-broken: by rubbing their noses in it.

And of course there are the compromisers, who advocate correcting all trifling errors, and using "sic" only on the worst offenses.

My own position, as many already know, is to roll out the 16-inch guns and



blast the boobs point-blank. For instance, if my anonymous friend had submitted his note as a letter to the editor, and if I had been in charge of editing it, he would have been slammed with two "sics" for misspelling "Andersen", a third "sic" for neglecting the hyphen in "non-continuous", a fourth for missing another hyphen in "Well-wisher" (without the hyphen, sir, you are merely a "healthy" yearner), and a fifth "sic" for spelling "Webster's" as "Webster."

Considering there were only ten words in the note, this is a batting average of .500. Not a bad score if you are playing baseball.

## Desperate struggle for disarmament and world peace

The nuclear arms race is growing at an alarmingly dangerous rate. Unless stopped it could end in a nuclear holocaust that would destroy us all.

The right to live is a sacred right of every person. It is necessary for each country to make its contribution to the strengthening of world peace and security and to the promotion of fundamental rights, economic and social progress and well-being for all peoples.

Peace is a thing of undimishing value for mankind, we have to raise the banner of peace and cooperation among peoples and we shall remain true to this banner. Peace and freedom are inseparable, they are in the very nature of the new society which many countries of the world are building today.

Our governments must build peaceful initiatives and make them their regular proposals for new steps to strengthen peace. They should maintain neighbourly relationships between states, avert the arms race and promote disarmament.

In their efforts to maintain and develop an atmosphere of detente in international relations, the people of the world should fight for a clear and well-defined program of struggle for a just, democratic and universal peace.

Upon us exists the terrible threat of the neutron bomb: a very deadly and dangerous weapon that can exterminate civilization.

The struggle for peace and disarmament has to remain the pivot of the fundamental principle of a better policy now and for the foreseeable future.

A little more than 40 years ago, on September 1, 1939, the Second World War began which destroyed more than fifty millions

lives. When the rapid deployment force "is being prepared today for seizing raw materials and carrying out punitive functions it is a threat to peace; and when people march through the cities of Europe under Hitler's banners - that also is a threat to peace.

It is profoundly symbolic that the peoples of the world, remembering the tragedy of the past, have marked September 1st

as International Peace Day. They have faith in the prospects of cooperation opened by the policy of detente. They are thinking of peace and the staving off of a new

catastrophe.  
**THERE MUST BE NO THIRD WORLD WAR!!**

Christina Fernandez  
Agriculture

## Kill for juicy supper

You think that I am well-meaning but that I take some things too seriously.

You wonder how I can be so self-righteous as to feel anger as I watch you laugh at the discomfort I feel in finding animal flesh in the food they serve me. You are thinking that it is okay to be radical but don't be rude. Can you see through my anger without troubling to look for its source?

I say that you don't care to see what you're doing. You don't care to see that your juicy safeway supper is a thing torn from that which is so much more than thing, a muscle ripped from a being more like yourself than you dare consider. You don't care to see

that the money you give to the cashier is the killer's fee, the scalper's bounty, or that because you hire the killer it is in the end you who kill. You are like a CIA directing assassinations, a yawning president ordering another bombing. You have succeeded in divorcing your name from the deed.

Yet I still want you to be my friend, for you have shown through your gifts to those you look like that love is not foreign to you. And so I'll almost always hold my silence as I continue to watch you mop blood with bread, and I'll do my human best to keep my smile from slipping.

D. Dubinsky  
Grad Studies

## Debate it

I should like to take this opportunity to correct the impressions left by a letter in the November 19 "Gateway". It was suggested in this letter that the only method of meeting other Universities was inter-varsity sport: this is factually incorrect.

The Debating Society has been involved in that sort of idea from its inception in 1909. Moreover we have faithfully represented the University not only at the national scale but at World Championships - including the last four consecutive years. Unlike the Golden Bears we have never been shut down for costing the university too much money (which has happened to the intervarsity football twice). Moreover both the U.A.B. and the Student's Union have declined to pay any travel costs for our people. So if any persons wishing to pay their own way to represent the university in Auckland are now receiving free transport for their athletic activities they should contact the Debating Society - Box 147 SU.B.

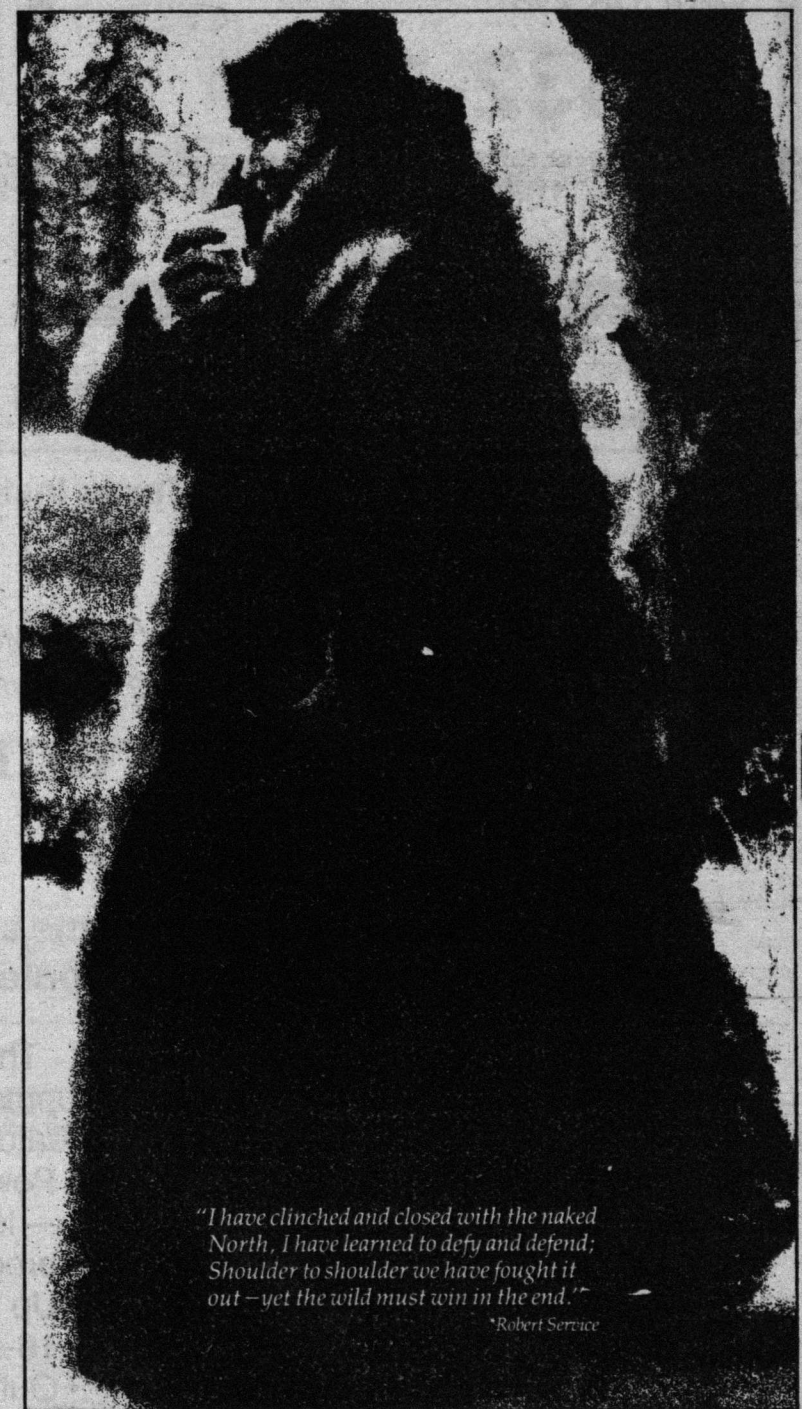
Kevan Warner  
President

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- Robert Service

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