

An Exchange of Memos

TO : B605
THRU : B62
FROM : B6205
SUBJECT: Editing Rules for the SEAS

1. A fault of sorts in SEAS reports
 Has come to our attention
 Although a slight and trifling blight,
 It's nevertheless worth mention.
2. By rights, you see, the SEAS should be
 Quite flawless in design:
 A classic thing that well might bring
 Sweet tears to eyes divine.
3. It ought to be invariably
 Perfect to the letter,
 Serene in view, similar to
 The Bible, only better.
4. The problem now is simply how
 To keep the SEAS consistent.
 The document is by intent
 Consistency-resistant.
5. Ostensibly, the number "three"
 To use a quick example,
 Is written out. Without a doubt
 The rules are plain and ample.
6. We have to add that, good or bad,
 The SIGINT Manual notes
 "Use digits for all numbers more
 Than nine except in quotes."
7. And yet the SEAS is, by degrees,
 Changing over to digits.
 An intermix of 6 and six
 Appears, like feisty midgets.
8. The figure "10" is now and then
 Written as a number.
 And then again, it comes up "ten"
 Which looks a whole lot dumber.
9. We feel chagrined, trapped in the end,
 Hating the label "OH-fiver"
 As if the Pope were sniffing dope
 While posing as Lady Godiva.
10. Aghast, forlorn, our honour shorn,
 Our dignity impaled,
 Our image gone, we struggle on
 Wondering where we failed.

11. We turn to you, the mentors who
 Can save us from disaster
 Oh tell us please, within the SEAS
 Of which you're lord and master:
12. For our input from head to foot
 To meet some kind of norm,
 When should we use the 1's and 2's
 And when the written form?

[Redacted]
 Chief, B6205

(b)(3)-P.L. 86-36

TO : B6205
THRU : B62
FROM : B605
SUBJECT: Reply to B62/407-67

1. Though we haven't the time to expend on rhyme
 That exists in B62,
 We were of a mind to reply in kind
 To your critical review.
2. We never pretend to work toward the end
 Of unreachable perfection;
 But we appeal to your honest zeal
 And your sense of self-direction.
3. The rules, we confess, have sometimes been less
 Than easy to understand
 And appear, no doubt, to leave you without
 An answer on either hand.
4. Though we may agree that the number three
 Should always appear as a word,
 We must, of course, adhere to the source
 To which the TECHINS referred.
5. A foolish consistency deadens existence: see
 How this verse is blest
 With changes, by damn, in meter: iamb
 To dactyl and anapaest.
6. We think you'd do better to loosen, unfetter,
 Your fine editorial skill,
 Rather than waste your inherent good taste
 In a digit-or-number drill.
7. Therefore, a number need not encumber
 Your style, so long as the rule
 For usage is clear, your effort sincere,
 And you never relinquish your cool.

[Redacted]
 B605

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~~SECRET~~ 27

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