

[syndicated column in March 2004 *Funny Times* (Cleveland OH), p. 19, with reference numbers added to the examples]

## Don't Dangle Your Participles in Public by Richard Lederer

The *AP Press Guide to News Writing* advises: "The language has many ways to trip you up, most deviously through a modifier that turns up in the wrong place. Don't let related ideas in a sentence drift apart. Modifiers should be close to the word they purport to modify." These statements culled from newspapers and magazines demonstrate what happens when a writer dangles his or her participles in public:

(1)

The family lawyer will read the will tomorrow at the residence of Mr. Hannon, who died June 19 to accommodate his relatives.

(2)

Mrs. Shirley Baxter, who went deer hunting with her husband, is very proud that she was able to shoot a fine buck as well as her husband.

(3)

The body was found in an alley by a passer-by with a bullet in his head.

(4)

The suspect was spotted in a vehicle matching the description of one which had been stolen from the Annabelle area by Sheriff's Office Sgt. Craig White.

(5)

Organ donations from the living reached a record high last year, outnumbering donors who are dead for the first time.

(6)

The burglar was about 30 years old, white, 5' 10", with wavy hair weighing about 150 pounds.

(7)

Beginning with three games on Tuesday, the unmistakable drama of postseason baseball will grip all of us who love the game for a month.

(8)

Despite its dismal record in human rights, the House of Representatives has granted most favored nation status to China.

(9)

Residents will be given information on how to reduce the amount of garbage they generate in the form of lectures, printed literature and promotional items.

(10)

Aided by a thousand eyes, the author explains how ants navigate and how they use dead reckoning.

(11)

The dog was hungry and made the mistake of nipping a 2-year-old that was trying to force feed it in his ear.

(12)

We spent most of our time sitting on the back porch watching the cows playing Scrabble and reading.

(13)

Hunting can also be dangerous, as in the case of pygmies hunting elephants armed only with spears.

(14)

Police searched into the night for a man armed with a shotgun that walked into a Boulder pharmacy Thursday morning, demanded drugs and then fled.

(15)

An ethnically diverse crowd of about 50 gathered at the Falkirk Mansion in San Rafael yesterday for a speakout against hate crimes organized by the Marin County Human Rights Roundtable.