

Housekeeping With Grandma

By Anna Von Reitz



This week, I have had people accusing me of "stealing" my own work, because unscrupulous con artists published my work as theirs. They simply plagiarized entire books, claimed author-ship, and the resulting controversy wasn't settled until I totally lost my temper and asked, "Who in this group (the offenders) has the knowledge and ability to write something like this?"

Dead silence. The Truth and the writing style and everything else was suddenly apparent and we were able to determine who wrote what and who didn't write anything at all---- just "misappropriated" someone else's work and claimed it was their group's publication.

This kind of skullduggery is unfortunately all too common.

To repeat--- my policy is to allow reposting and republication for educational purposes so long as the content is not altered and the source is fully credited.

Just this morning I gave such permission to someone who is publishing a compendium of information for home school families, so it isn't hard to obtain so long as you: (1) don't alter the material, and (2) credit the source.

This cuts me out of a lot of income from royalties and publication permission deals, but it gets the word out, and will hopefully save both American property and American lives which is the whole point.

While we are on this topic --- let me point out that there are reasons why people should abide by this simple set of copyright rules.

First, I am responsible for what I say. I know the sources and the validity of the records on which I stand. People who copycat and plagiarize do not. They won't be able to defend the things I have written and will get themselves in trouble if a court or other authority questions them and they claim authorship --- so it isn't only a matter of "credit" for me --- it's a matter of protection for you, to accurately present what I have written and attribute it to me.

Second, it's the right thing to do. Your thoughts are your property just as much as your bicycle or your car. Stealing thoughts and words are theft in just the same way as if you'd broken into my garage and taken my bike. So consider that when you are sharing information that I've written or transcripts of what I've said.

The other thing that has raised its ugly head this week is that many people are struggling with an inability to read. I don't mean absolute illiteracy, such that they can't read basic things like road signs and telephone bills, but they can't read more complex material to save themselves. Many young people below the age of forty are struggling with very poor reading skills. And many of them are embarrassed or angry to admit it.

This is one of the worst failings of an educational system that I can imagine and many parents and grandparents need to be made aware of the situation.

We have two generations of Americans who are reading at the level of third graders.

Throughout this entire effort, I have often been amazed because I have been attacked for saying things I never said, writing things I didn't write, or doing things I didn't do.

And in review, most of those incidents are because the people attacking couldn't read at a high enough level to be able to rightly interpret the content of what they were reading.

A prime example is the idea that I ever worked for the Vatican, because in the process of serving Due Process on Municipal Government officials, I acted in the capacity of "personal attorney" for Pope Benedict XVI, who never intended for them to be conducting business in the manner they were (and are) conducting it.

People who can't read very well misinterpret that whole scenario, because the Vatican is all they know about the Church, and they don't know what a "private attorney" is.

Another example is the idea that Americans are all U.S. Citizens of some kind.

People who can't read well don't notice the difference between "U.S. Citizen" and "US CITIZEN" and "United States Citizen" and so on, much less do they catch the nuances of the different meanings attached to these descriptors.

This inability to read well enough to catch the drift, then leaves these people open to be defrauded and preyed upon.

As parents and grandparents we owe it to our children and they owe it to themselves, to develop their reading skills-- which includes the use of dictionaries.

I have the pleasure of talking to people of all ages every day. One of the most astounding observations I've made is that young people don't know when they need to look a word up in a dictionary--- they just try to "gloss over" it and guess at its meaning from context.

This is especially dangerous when legalese is involved, and you may in fact need not only a legal dictionary but a financial dictionary as well.

I cannot count the times that I thought I knew the meaning of a word, only to find out that some enterprising legal beagle had found an arcane meaning for it, and was trying to pass something off on me.

If this is still happening to me after forty years of sifting legal crappola through fine sieves, it is certainly no shame for any young person to grab a dictionary off the shelf (or pull it up on the computer), yet many of them are too lazy or too embarrassed to admit that they don't know the meaning of a word to take the necessary action.

Remember that we are all ignorant. It's just a spectrum of "more ignorant" or "less ignorant". There's no shame in admitting this and even less shame in doing something to improve upon our situation.

So take a half an hour, here and there, Grandpa and Grandma, to explore the dictionary with your children and grandchildren. Show them the different kinds of dictionaries at the Public Library. Teach them how to look words up in a dictionary and impress it upon them that the dictionary is their friend. And there is never any shame in consulting a dictionary.

You'll be doing them, yourselves, and your country a big favor.

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