By Nancy Whitaker

MAKING SENSE (CENTS) OF IT

Did you know that even though English is the most widely spoken language that it is crazy and some of the phrases used in it just do not make any sense.

In fact, some of the words and their meanings make the best writer or orator wonder the why and how's of certain words.

In what other language do people drive in a parkway and park in a driveway?

Then why do people play at a recital and recite at a play?

Why is it that when we transport something by car, it's called a shipment, but when we transport something by ship, it's called cargo?

Why do we pack suits in a garment bag and garments in a suitcase?

Why, in our crazy language, can your nose run and your feet smell?

Why can hot dogs be cold, darkrooms can be lit, homework can be done in school, and nightmares can take place in broad daylight?

Then why can morning sickness and daydreaming take place at night, tomboys are girls, quicksand works very slowly, boxing rings are square, silverware and glasses can be made of plastic and tablecloths of paper? And doesn't it seem a little bizarre that we go to the bathroom in order to go to the bathroom?

Also, why is it that a woman can man a station, but a man can't woman one, that a man can father a movement, but a woman can't mother one, and that a king rules a kingdom but a queen doesn't rule a queendom? In what other language do they call the third hand on the clock the second hand?

Why it is called a TV set when you get only one?

If pro and con are opposites, is congress the opposite of progress?

A writer is someone who writes, and a stinger is something that stings. But fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce, hammers don't ham, humdingers don't humding, ushers don't ush, and haberdashers do not haberdash.

If the plural of tooth is teeth, shouldn't the plural of booth be beeth? One goose, two geese, so why not one moose, two meese? If the teacher taught, why isn't it also true that the preacher praught?

A hot cup of coffee. Here again the English language gets us in hot water. Who cares if the cup is hot? Surely we mean a cup of hot coffee.

Pull up a chair. We don't really pull a chair up; we pull it along the ground. We don't pick up the phone; we pick up the receiver. And we don't really throw up; we throw out.

Put on your shoes and socks. This is an exceedingly difficult maneuver. Most of us put on our socks first, then our shoes.

Still, you have to marvel at the unique lunacy of the English language, in which you can turn a light on, turn a light off and you can turn a light out, but you can't turn a light in. Here is another one to ponder. How can your house simultaneously burn up and burn down?

Now think about this one. Your alarm clock goes off by going on, you are inoculated for measles by being inoculated against measles.

There is no eggs in eggplant or any ham in hamburger, nor is there apple or pine in pineapple.

A guinea pig is not from Guinea or is it a pig. In closing I ask this, "If a father is a pop, why isn't a mother a mop?

An unknown author wrote a poem about the English language and it says in part, "We speak of a brother, and also of brethren,

But though we say mother, we never say methren.

The masculine pronouns are he, his and him,

But imagine the feminine she, shis, and shim.

So our English, I think you will agree,

Is the trickiest language you ever did see.”

These paradoxes and the English language has some strange idiocryoacies, but it is our language and you have to love it.

Don’t you love the English language? What was the first word you ever said as a child? Do you think English has a crazy side to it? Let me know and I’ll give you a Penny for Your Thoughts.