

CAROLINE'S MINUSCULAE

Collector's item, found in an advertisement in a local newspaper:
"We will meet or beat all bonified deals with any dealer."

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Martin Luther completed his translation of the Old Testament (Bible) between 1523 and 1532, and also translated the New Testament. By the time of his death in 1546, and with the assistance of his colleagues, the number of editions of this Bible, or parts of it, had risen to 377, exclusive of the Low German versions of it.

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Caroline is very much perturbed about the current confusion between space and time. Euclid defined a point as having position but no magnitude. Nowadays we are constantly subjected to "At this point in time." Caroline would like to know why this is used in preference to "now", or "at this moment".

Recently a radio announcer, discussing a new play, said that the plot dealt with the demise and subsequent death of the central character. Caroline is wondering whether this is what is meant by double jeopardy.

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Readers of G. K. Chesterton are probably familiar with his story "The Club of Queer Trades", published in 1905. The Club's membership consisted of people who were so rich and vacuous that they were prepared to pay any price for any relief from their boredom. In spite of our boasting about educational superiority today, we seem to have built up a society of corporate executives who are prepared to pay a fee for advice on how to spell, what phrases to use, and, generally, the application of those phrases both in speech and letter-writing. At least, this is implicit in a recent announcement by a company established to provide such a service. There was a time, not very long ago, when it was one of the functions of a private secretary to provide such service. While it is utterly absurd, and depressing, that people are prepared to pay a fee in order to appear to be literate, there is a bright side, *viz*, soon we may see, or hear, less it's as the possessive form of it; who's, as the possessive form of who; cohort as a friend or ally; between you and I; neither or; either nor, to cite only a few of the current abuses of the English language.

Wilf Chappell