

Light Relief A Palindromic Interpreter's Life

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LIGHT RELIEF A PALINDROMIC INTERPRETER'S LIFE

I. MARIAN MARICA

There is no peace for the harmless interpreter seeking occasional relaxation in between 'phone calls, get-togethers, questionnaires, invitations to work, orders to travel, 'plane and hotel reservations, bag-packing, boning up on that esoteric SUPPERWARE sales jargon or reading up, during a queasy flight, on the crazy convolutions of the G.I. tract — all of this aimed at perfecting the task of putting on a hopefully captivating performance for a hopelessly captive audience. There is no denying that it is becoming more and more difficult for your conscientious conference interpreter to get away from shop.

Even in the course of casual extra-curricular reading, a seemingly innocent play on words turns out to be a beastly reminder of working rules. Only yesterday, for instance, I came across an interfering palindrome quizzing me, from the safe shelter of anonymity, as to how many interpreters for a four-language meeting (as if I didn't know!):

DO NINE MEN INTERPRET? — NINE MEN, I NOD...

Such constant harassment is quite distressing. What a life! And what have I done to deserve it? —

I TOP POTS, LEPERS REPEL, STAB BATS, STOP POT, I NEVER EVEN SLAP PALS, NEVER EVEN when they garble my learned prose by coughing straight into the microphone.

Am I not entitled to a little peace and quiet? Or am I living in the clouds? Would you say (I have a sneaking suspicion you would, so the question is really rhetorical) that I, MARIAN, I, FOOL, ALOOF IN AIR AM I?

