

- Hang on to your left superior frontal gyrus. Why? Because according to "Nature," stimulating it makes you giggle which I believe is the function of "En Passant."
- Dredging through this month's file of source clippings did not do much for my left superior frontal gyrus (or LSFG for those addicted to acronyms). A teacher in Virginia has been charged with assault and battery for clipping a student's fingernails without the parents' permission (Globe and Mail March 5 '98). The owner of Joe's Stone Crab Restaurant who hired women managers and men waiters has been convicted of "unintentional" sex discrimination and could be dinged one million dollars, and the Australian Camel Racing Association while attempting to start a women's league has been accused of "group sexual exploitation" by that country's Minister for the Status of Women. Never mind political correctness and mad cow disease, I attribute these hyper-serious responses to absolute trivia to an epidemic of LSFG atrophy (henceforth to be known as "En Passant Syndrome" or EPS).
- Happily, this silent menace has not affected one bilingual reader (who shall remain nameless to protect him, her or it from the wrath of the EPS afflicted). It was drawn to my attention that my January editorial (J Soc Obstet Gynaecol Can 1998;20:11-13), "Let us Now Praise Famous Men," was rendered in French as "Louons Maintenant les Grands Hommes." This, I am assured can be translated as "Let us now hire fat men." The translator may be guilty of "unintentional" sex discrimination to say nothing of excluding applications from the circumferentially challenged.
- En Passant Syndrome (EPS) apparently can exist in both acute and chronic forms. I think I had a transient attack when I read the word "Disintermediation" in a CMA conference programme. The full title of the talk to be given was, "Treatment choice: health professional education in an era of disintermediation."



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I went to "Oxford." I went to "Webster's." No sign of the word. My best attempts to understand by going back to the roots gave me: Dis—prefix indicating reversal, Inter—to bury, Mediation—to intervene. Why we should be teaching medical professionals to interfere with the digging up of the departed is quite beyond me. Put it down to EPS.

- The only known therapy for LSFG atrophy is stimulation of the dormant but potentially responsive cortical cells. The world of academia can be a rich source of such treatment provided it is applied holistically and in homeopathic doses. Why would animal researchers cross a llama with a camel to produce a "Cama" (Globe and Mail Feb 11 '98)? Llamas live at high and cold altitudes. Camels store water. Perhaps the new beast of burden can produce ice cubes. Perhaps the "Cama" could be a water-cooled, turbo-charged class of the Australian Camel Racing Association. Why would a learned society entitle its programme, "International Conference on the Pelvic Floor"? On the ocean floor perhaps, even on the dance floor, but where will all the delegates sit? The potential for detrusor instability boggles the mind. And if you must name endowed chairs, try to avoid both "The Streisand (Barbra) Professorship in Sexuality and Intimate Relations" (USC) and the "Nippon Electric Chair in Computer Science and Engineering (MIT)."
- This month's "Man's inhumanity to man," or in this case to parrot, award goes to the owner of Rupert, an African Grey. The bird alerted his owner to an apartment fire by squawking, "Hi-ya Rup." The owner dropped her dogs to safety and bailed out herself leaving Rupert to deal with some pretty heavy duty second-hand smoke. The parrot survived and has been rewarded by the donation of \$80 worth of bird toys. Despite that, it may take years for the unfortunate avian's LSFG to recover.